

Opposition claims clashes in Bahrain

NICOSIA (AFP) — Riot police fired rubber bullets and teargas on Friday when clashes erupted in Bahrain after security forces surrounded two mosques, preventing weekly prayers, opposition figures said. Riot police tried to disperse the crowds in the two Shiite villages of Diraz and Bani Jamra close to Manama as demonstrators shouted "Allahu Akbar" (God is great), the country's main opposition leader Sheikh Abdul Amir Jamri told AFP. But he did not know if there had been any casualties as his home had also been surrounded by security services. There was no official comment on the incidents. Riot police at dawn had surrounded and shut the country's main Shiite mosque, the Noq mosque at Diraz, where he had been scheduled to hold Friday prayers and read an opposition communiqué, Sheikh Jamri told AFP. They also closed a second mosque, the Momim mosque, near his house in Bani Jamra. "People were prevented from going to these mosques, and demonstrations were held in Bani Jamra and Diraz, and the security forces fired rubber bullets and teargas," he said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Volume 21 Number 6110

AMMAN SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1995, SHA'BAN 8, 1416

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

'Yemen, Eritrea agree to evacuate islands'

ASMARA (AFP) — Yemen and Eritrea have agreed in principle to withdraw troops from the disputed Hanish islands guarding access to strategic Red Sea shipping lanes, Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said Friday.

It was the first sign of a breakthrough since Eritrean forces captured the island of Hanish Al Kabir (Greater Hanish) on December 18 in a three-day battle in which nine soldiers died.

Mr. Meles met for several hours in the Eritrean capital with President Issaias Afewerki, following talks in Sanaa on Thursday with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

He announced that both presidents had agreed to a demilitarisation of the nine islands in the Hanish archipelago but said the format had to be worked out, state radio reported.

He added the two countries were narrowing their differences, saying he was optimistic of a negotiated settlement to the crisis.

"The cloud of war doesn't hang over the area anymore," Mr. Meles said. "It's an extremely positive development."

Ethiopia — which gets much of its supplies, particularly oil, via the Red Sea shipping lanes — offered to try to broker a settlement immediately after the crisis erupted.

But a previous shuttle mission by the Ethiopian foreign minister, who visited both capitals, twice failed to break

the deadlock.

Mr. Meles' announcement came as U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali arrived in Sanaa in a further bid to mediate in the dispute. He is to spend three days in Yemen before travelling to Eritrea for talks, officials said.

"The United Nations can play a role in the peaceful resolution to the conflict between Eritrea and Yemen, but this role depends on the willingness of the two sides," Mr. Boutros-Ghali told Yemen's official SABA news agency.

Egypt, Russia and the Organisation for African Unity have also been working behind the scenes.

Earlier, Yemeni Prime Minister Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani had repeated Yemen's demand for a unilateral Eritrean withdrawal from the disputed island.

"It is necessary for Eritrean forces to evacuate this Yemeni island as a precondition to any peaceful solution based on international law," he told journalists.

Meanwhile, Eritrean foreign ministry official Girma Asmerom told AFP that everything was ready for 195 Yemeni prisoners to be repatriated after being handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross, denying Sanaa's accusations of foot-dragging.

"The delay is because we had to organise their transportation from the coast in an ambulance, as they're

seriously wounded.

"Everything is ready for their departure. We made every effort we could to facilitate it."

He said transportation to the airport was ready, and the ICRC-chartered plane, which arrived in Asmara Friday, had been given clearance.

"We're cooperating in all our capacities. It would not serve the peace process to use such allegations that are useless."

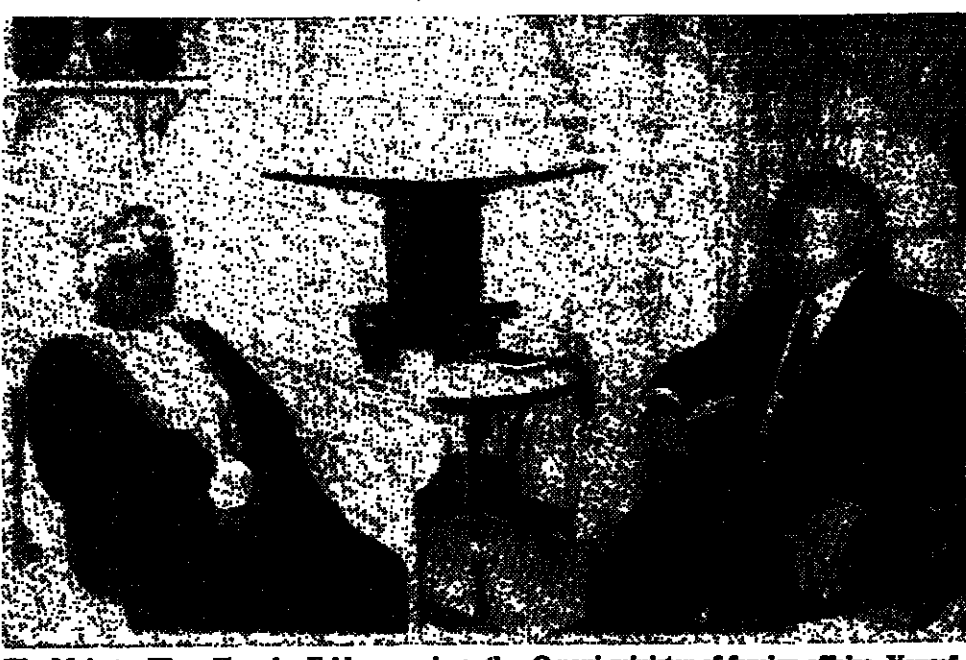
Sources told AFP that Mr. Afewerki shook the hands of each of the captured soldiers on Thursday as they were being handed over to ICRC officials.

But a Yemeni official said: "The Eritreans are dragging their feet when the prisoners should have been repatriated on Wednesday."

Despite some progress in the negotiations, officials say it will take time to reach an overall agreement.

Sanaa is demanding a complete withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Hanish Al Kabir before the opening of talks on the final status of the archipelago. Asmara wants international observers to draw up a simultaneous withdrawal of all military forces from the island chain.

But the official Yemeni daily Al Thawra slammed the negotiations, saying "Eritrea does not have the right to occupy the island and announce afterwards that it would be prepared to withdraw if there was an international presence."



His Majesty King Hussein Friday receives the Omani minister of foreign affairs, Youssef Ben Alawi, at Al Nadwa Palace (Petra photo)

Ben Alawi ends visit

Jordan, Oman urge Baghdad to abide by U.N. resolutions

AMMAN (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein Friday received at Al Nadwa Palace the Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Youssef Ben Alawi. The King reviewed with the visiting Omani minister bilateral relations between the two countries. They discussed regional and international issues, including efforts to achieve Arab solidarity, the latest developments in the Middle East peace process, and coordinating the two countries' positions towards these issues.

King Hussein also discussed with Mr. Ben Alawi the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the Red Sea Island of Hanish and emphasised the need to resolve it by peaceful means. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti.

Oman's ambassador to Jordan, and the head of the Arab Department at the Omani Foreign Ministry.

Also Friday Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker received Mr. Ben Alawi and discussed with him bilateral relations and inter-Arab relations, in addition to the situation in Iraq. The two officials stressed support for Iraq's unity, and the need to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people, noting the need on the part of Iraq to adhere to all United Nations resolutions, pertaining to the sanctions imposed on that country.

Mr. Ben Alawi left Amman later on Friday at the end of a two-day visit.

Oman, a member of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, has been encouraging

the Gulf states to renew links with Jordan, broken off in 1990 because of the Kingdom's perceived tilt towards Iraq after it invaded Kuwait.

The sultanate is spearheading a normalisation process with Israel, despite the hesitancy demonstrated by other states in that alliance.

Inspired by progress in Israel's negotiations with its immediate Arab neighbours, Oman is moving towards initiating trade relations with the Jewish State. A deal is expected to be concluded next month.

Last year, the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin visited Oman. In November, Mr. Ben Alawi attended Mr. Rabin's funeral, marking the first public visit by a Gulf Arab official to Israel.

Syria, Israel end 3 days of talks on positive note

WASHINGTON (Agencies)

Israel-Syria peace talks concluded on Friday in rural Maryland, but informal discussions will continue in Washington over the weekend, the State Department said.

Describing the negotiations as "useful and conducive to further discussion," State Department spokesman John Dinger said Israeli and Syrian participants would remain in the area and talk informally, and the United States would also participate.

The next round of talks between the two countries is scheduled for next Wednesday.

Participants in this first set of talks had originally been expected to return to the Middle East for weekend consultations. The change in plans was suggested by the United States and agreed to by both Syrian and Israeli delegations, Mr. Dinger said.

These talks, the first between the two countries since peace negotiations broke down in June, were expected to centre on terms of an Israeli withdrawal from the

Golan Heights.

A news blackout has been imposed on the talks, held in seclusion at the Wye Plantation conference centre on Maryland's eastern shore, about an hour's drive from Washington.

But Israeli print and radio reported that the Jewish state had made proposals at the talks for bilateral economic cooperation and development in the event of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

For the first time, negotiations also directly addressed territorial aspects of such a withdrawal, along with relevant security issues and the nature of an eventual peace agreement, the reports said.

Internal Security Minister Moshe Shapah was quoted as saying in Jerusalem that Israel "will accept a total retreat from the Golan if they are persuaded of the peaceful intentions of Syria."

Peace, he said, "is a very real possibility."

"We did not occupy the

(Continued on page 7)

Arafat due to enter Ramallah today

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

(Agencies) — Palestinian self-rule leader Yasser Arafat will pay his first visit to the newly autonomous West Bank town of Ramallah on Saturday, and not Friday as previously announced, his aides said.

Ramallah, the business capital of the Palestinian territories, was turned over to Palestinian control Wednesday after 28 years of Israeli occupation, becoming the seventh and last main West Bank town to gain autonomy ahead of self-rule elections in January.

Nabil Abu Rudeina, a top Arafat aide, said the Palestinian leader would address Ramallah residents Saturday. Earlier, Palestinian officials had said Mr. Arafat would visit the town Friday.

Palestinian sources said Mr. Arafat could hold a meeting of his council of ministers in the town, located 10 kilometres north of Jerusalem.

Palestinian police were due to move into several villages around Ramallah on Friday, notably the university town of Bir Zeit, completing their deployment in the prosperous region of 70,000.

On Thursday Palestinian protesters threw three firebombs at an Israeli army vehicle at a crossroads near the flashpoint West Bank town of Hebron, military sources said.

A soldier was slightly injured when his hair was set on fire during the attack, the sources said, adding that the army had questioned suspects and sealed off the area.

Much of Hebron is scheduled to be evacuated by Israeli troops in March under an Israeli-PLO accord extending autonomy in the West Bank.

However some troops will remain to guard 400 Jewish settlers living in the centre of the town, surrounded by 120,000 Palestinians.

Meanwhile, Mr. Abu Rudeina said Mr. Arafat will pay an official visit to Saudi Arabia early next month following a recent tour of other Gulf states, his first since the Gulf war.

Mr. Abu Rudeina said Mr. Arafat would travel to Saudi Arabia "to congratulate King Fahd on his return to good health" after the Saudi monarch's recent hospitalisation.

Mr. Abu Rudeina declined to provide any further details or dates for the trip, saying only that the visit would take place in early January ahead of Palestinian elections scheduled for the 20th.

Mr. Arafat visited Qatar

and the United Arab Emirates in the third week of December and travelled to Oman early this week in an effort to mend ties with Gulf Arab nations angered by his support for Iraq in its 1990 invasion of Kuwait and subsequent war against a U.S.-led coalition.

It was Mr. Arafat's first visit to Qatar and the UAE since the war, although he has travelled to Oman and Saudi Arabia since then.

The wealthy Gulf states had been the main financial backers of Mr. Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organisation prior to the war.

He is now seeking support for the Palestinian self-rule authority he heads.

In Cairo, the Palestinian hardline group Hamas said it hoped to expand its dialogue with Mr. Arafat even if it will not participate in upcoming elections, an Arab League official said Friday.

Mohammad Nazzari, a member of a Hamas delegation which held talks with the authority in Cairo last week, met with League Deputy Secretary General Said Kamal on Friday.

Mr. Nazzari said the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas "is examining the widening of the dialogue with the authority," Mr. Kamal told journalists afterwards, without providing details.

Mr. Nazzari also underlined that Hamas had "no intention to issue statements urging a boycott" of Palestinian elections set for January 20, even if it does not itself plan to join.

Three days of reconciliation talks between Hamas and the PLO-dominated Palestinian Authority in Cairo failed to convince the group to join the elections or drop its campaign of anti-Israeli attacks.

But Hamas did agree not to enforce a boycott of the vote for a self-rule council and its president.

On Thursday Mr. Arafat issued a decree enlarging the Palestinian legislative council to be elected in January by four seats to 87 seats, Wafa Palestinian news agency said.

Last week, Israeli agreed that the council be enlarged. The decree allocates an extra seat each to Jerusalem, Gaza City, Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip and Hebron in the West Bank.

PLO officials said earlier this week the change was to ensure adequate representation in the districts involved. The first Palestinian national elections are to be held on January 20 under the PLO-Israel peace deal.

Russian aid for Iraqi children

AMMAN (AFP) — Russia has sent 27 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Iraq, including food and medicines for children, Russian diplomats said here Friday.

The aid travelled Thursday from Jordan to Baghdad after arriving Wednesday by Russian cargo plane in Amman and has been provided with the "financial participation of the oil company LUKoil," a diplomat said. LUKoil is the largest Russian oil company, which in July won a 70 per cent share in a joint development project at the western Qurna Iraqi oil field to be launched once crippling U.N. sanctions are lifted. An oil and trade embargo was slapped on Iraq when it invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Despite the sanctions, Baghdad has negotiated several contracts with international oil firms to be carried out at a later stage.

500 Yemeni soldiers pardoned

SANAA (AP) — More than 500 soldiers and officers who fought with southern secessionists in last year's civil war in Yemen have returned and rejoined the army under a presidential amnesty, military officials said Friday.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Vice President Abd Rabbu Mansour visited the men at the Al Nasr military camp near here Thursday and told them they would be paid all their salaries and given promotions if they deserved. Thousands of southern soldiers and supporters of the secessionists, who were defeated by the northern-based government, fled to neighbouring countries when the two-month war ended in July 1994.

BBC French falls silent

LONDON (AFP) — BBC World Service broadcasts to Europe in French will fall silent after Sunday, ending a tradition dating back to 1938, the government-funded radio said Friday. The shutdown, plus the closing of a BBC news and music programming service to about 100 French commercial FM stations, is expected to save £6 million (\$9.3 million) a year, it said.

4 die in Israeli raid on S. Lebanon

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies)

A man was killed and three other civilians were wounded Friday by Israeli shells packed with metal darts during a bombardment triggered by a guerrilla attack on the Israeli-occupied zone in south Lebanon, U.N. sources reported.

They said the victims, all Lebanese, were hit in the village of Kabrikha, which is policed by Ghannian soldiers of the United Nations peacekeeping force.

The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said 20-year-old Ali Ibrahim Mansour was killed when a 155-mm Howitzer shell hit his house.

His father, Ali Ibrahim, 60, and 22-year-old brother Hassan, were wounded in the artillery and tank barrage. So was neighbour Osama Fahs, 17, the sources added.

That raised the casualty toll in fighting in the south, the last active warfront in the

Arab-Israeli conflict, to 186 killed and 308 wounded. Security sources reported that the Lebanese were hit by flechette shells, which spray out hundreds of darts when they explode.

These are prohibited internationally. But security officials say the Israelis have fired them on several occasions this year.

U.N. spokesman Timur Goksel said long-range Israeli artillery and tanks poured "lots of phosphorous, concussion and flechette shells on Kabrikha."

The shelling followed a mortar attack by Shiite Muslim guerrillas of the Iranian-backed Hizbollah, or party of God, on a post manned by Israeli troops and allied militiamen in the occupied border strip, known as the "security zone."

Israel has controlled the

(Continued on page 7)

France turns back 5 Moroccan stowaways

BREST, France (AFP)

France said Friday it would not accept five Moroccan stowaways who spent six days in a cargo container before being discovered, rejecting a plea by the ship's owners to let them be taken off.

French judicial officials said there was no reason why the five, discovered Thursday in the hold of the Saar Breda, should not continue on board the ship to its destination of Rotterdam.

"There is no longer any reason why the boat should not leave for its original destination of Rotterdam," said a police spokesman, adding that the cargo ship had adequate accommodation for them.

The German ship, travelling from Casablanca, docked in the French port city of Brest to allow them to be released. The five were inspected by doctors on board the vessel and were in good health. None was under 18, an official said.

The owners of the ship, Werner Bockstiegel Be-

ing legal action to force France to accept them.

A lawyer for the firm, Simon Foreman, said it was offering to pay for the five to be repatriated, by plane, to Morocco. It did not want the stowaways to remain on board, he said.

The stowaways were discovered on Thursday, after crew members had heard banging from inside an empty container. The ship had left the Moroccan port of Casablanca on Dec. 22.

A French association to aid immigrants sent a lawyer onto the ship to help the emigrants, and later called on Interior Minister Jean-Louis Debré to let them into the country for medical treatment.

One of the young men, who could speak a few words of French, told officials that the group had decided to stow away in order to get to "any European country."

Hundreds of Moroccans and other North Africans regularly seek illegal entry to countries of the European Union in search of work.

Turkish Islamists say they want good ties with West

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's

Islamist party, hoping to form a government after general elections last weekend, assured the West on Friday of good relations if it came to power.

"We have no intention of separating Turkey from the West and isolating it," Anatolian news agency quoted Welfare Party (RP) Deputy Chairman Abdullah Gul as saying. "We want to develop relations." Mr. Gul told reporters at a party meeting in Istanbul.

RP came first in last Sunday's polls but does not have enough seats to govern alone. Caretaker Prime Minister Tansu Ciller and other secularist leaders are trying to block the Islamists.

A customs union between NATO members Turkey and the European Union is due to go into force on January 1. Veteran party leader Necmettin Erbakan, in an apparent turnaround, said on Friday that the party did not oppose the trade deal.

"We are not against the customs union. We are against the form of the agreement, the text and the way it is being applied," Anatolian quoted Mr. Erbakan as saying.

Mr. Erbakan, a fiery public speaker who has toned down his anti-Western rhetoric af-

ter the polls, had termed the trade deal "slavery" during the election campaign.

Welfare took 158 seats in the 550-member parliament at the elections. Ms. Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) and a rival conservative party came in a close second with 131 and 135 seats respectively.

Ms. Ciller had presented the customs union, approved on December 13, as a victory for her Western vision over Welfare's Islamist values. Turkey is 99 per cent Muslim but strictly secular.

Meanwhile, Ms. Ciller began a year-end holiday on Friday.

Ms. Ciller abandoned the political wranglings in Ankara on Thursday night to head for a new year break at a Turkish ski resort with her family. No further talks between the other secular leaders were scheduled.

"She thinks it's better if the nerves are calmed a bit," a senior aide to Ms. Ciller told Reuters. A receptionist at the Kartalkaya resort north of Ankara where Ms. Ciller was staying said she had no political advisers in tow.

Two secularist leaders on Thursday branded Ms. Ciller an obstacle to a planned coalition to block the RP.

"The president will begin the process... there is nothing else to do at this stage," Ms.

Ciller said on Turkish television late on Thursday after two other secularist leaders accused her of hindering a proposed alliance and signalled a power struggle that could scupper the anti-Islamist plans.

"Let us wait. Otherwise it may look like we are trying to accuse each other and trap each other in a corner. This haste, rather than being constructive, may cause chaos," Ms. Ciller said.

Analysts say the country's lack of clear leadership may herald a drawn-out period of political uncertainty.

Turkey's pressing problems of 83 per cent annual inflation, an 11-year-old Kurdish rebel campaign and a faltering privatisation programme have received little attention since a government, crisis began when Ms. Ciller's right-left coalition collapsed in September.

Ms. Ciller and Motherland Party (ANAP) leader Mesut Yilmaz, both conservatives but bitter personal adversaries, agreed on Tuesday to block the Islamists with a secular coalition backed by the left.

But Mr. Yilmaz and leftist leader Bulent Ecevit accused Ms. Ciller of hurting negotiations by insisting on heading the alliance and keeping Mr. Ecevit out.

Quest for Alexander's grave continues

CAIRO (AFP) — A

Greek-Egyptian team will resume excavations on Sunday at a controversial site in the eastern oasis of Siwa which they say is the lost tomb of Alexander the Great, an official has said.

The six Egyptian and seven Greeks, including the leader and financier of the dig, Liani Souvaltz, will work at the site for two months, the head of the Supreme Council for Antiquities, Abdul Halim Nureddin, told AFP.

In February Ms. Souvaltz raised a storm of controversy when she announced that she had discovered Alexander's tomb in Siwa oasis, in the desert near the Libyan-Egyptian border.

She pointed to inscriptions found on the site she had been excavating since 1989. But an official Greek delegation discounted the claim, saying the writings dated to more than five centuries after Alexander's death in 323 B.C.

Mr. Nureddin said he was "convinced the site is an important archaeological discovery," but would not conjecture whether it

was actually the young conqueror's tomb.

"We hope that this excavation season will offer some evidence," he said.

The Greek members of the team are already at the site and the remainder are to arrive by Sunday for resumption of the dig, Mr. Nureddin said.

The site of Alexander the Great's tomb remains an enigma for archaeologists, most of whom place it in Alexandria, the Mediterranean city that the Macedonian ruler founded in 331 B.C., a year after conquering Egypt.

هناك عنه لتصل

Afro-Arab dialogue to offer 'historic chance' for regional cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Preparations are being made for an Afro-Arab parliamentary dialogue conference in Amman on Jan. 8, and invitations have been sent out to African and Arab parliamentarians to take part in the event, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'ed Hayel Srour announced Friday.

Mr. Srour said the three-day conference, which will be held under royal patronage, offers a historic chance to Arab and African parliamentarians to strengthen cooperation among countries and promoting the role of democracy in the African and Arab regions.

Jordan's delegation to the meetings, Mr. Srour said, is to be led by senator Abdul Salam Majali and will include three senators and eight deputies from the Lower House.

All technical and administrative arrangements are being taken to facilitate participation in the meetings, according to Mr. Srour.

The parliament speaker noted that a special seven-member Afro-Arab committee which held its meetings in Amman last March to prepare for the Jan. 8 conference has approved an agenda for the delegates.

The agenda includes three issues: The role of African and Arab parliamentarians in working out mechanisms aimed at preventing and/or settling conflicts in the Arab World and in Africa; Afro-Arab cooperation to keep Africa and the Arab World free of nuclear arms and other mass destruction weapons; and the impact of the application of the world's free trade on the economies of the African

and Arab countries, according to Mr. Srour.

The heads of delegations will deliver the main addresses at the opening session, to be followed by meetings through delegations' committees and groups which will prepare final reports to be reviewed by all delegations in the final and open session, according to Mr. Srour.

Mr. Srour said the Afro-Arab dialogue conferences, which are held every two years, were decided on by a general Afro-Arab parliamentary conference held in Tunis in March 1984.

On the sidelines of the upcoming conference, the Arab Parliamentary Union, which groups parliamentarians of the Arab World is likely to hold an informal meeting to discuss pan-Arab affairs and future pan-Arab action in the political fields.

Princess Basma announces formal birth of Jordanian National Forum for Women

'A new page in the work of women committees has been written'

By Amy Henderson
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — What would it take to lure more than 1,700 women away from their homes on a Friday, the most important day for family life in Jordan?

Answer: A one-hour gathering announcing that Jordan's Women Committees have achieved the legal status of a non-governmental organisation—now known as the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW).

Although just a formality, says Badia Murad, women committee member in West Amman, the importance of the JNFW is measured in terms of enthusiasm for the achievement, and the mere fact that women would abandon their traditional "Friday role" to travel from all corners of the Kingdom to celebrate women's achievements since the adoption of Jordan's National Strategy for Women in 1993.

"Can you imagine that women and men five or ten years ago would accept that a woman leaves her family and responsibilities on this day to attend something like this?" she asked. "It's doubtful, but this proves that an expanded women's role is gaining acceptance by both men and women."

Facing a sea of women as varied as their activities, Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, chairperson of the Jordanian National Committee for Women said, "During the past three years, we have written a new page in the work of women committees in the governorates based on our values and principles and spirit of family. We have achieved distinguished results. As a result and with the support of the government and other local NGOs, women have become a significant part of the formula of progress and development in this country."

The status of an NGO, says Rand Hindawi, coordinator for the women committees in the governorates,

may appear a minor achievement, but it does give to women a sense of credibility.

"It gives them a legal framework in which to operate," she said. "It's important also simply because now they are acknowledged as a legal entity—they can expand more easily, they can mobilise funds, and also, they can feel they belong. It's a good motivator."

Women Committees—now numbering 25 with a total membership of nearly 16,000 throughout Jordan—are a national initiative of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, and act at a grassroots level to motivate a gradual change of social attitude in their respective communities towards the role of women and their ability to affect change in society.

They mostly operate independently under the umbrella of the Jordanian National Committee for Women, a policy forum that put the task to women themselves to upgrade their status in society.

Today, committees in each governorate identify and prioritise their women's needs—which are often as varied as illiteracy; child care; environmental awareness; political, social, legal and human rights and income generation—and engage their respective communities in activities to educate and enhance women's lives.

"The point," says Rand Hindawi, coordinator of the committees within the governorates, "is that the family and the community feel, at the end of the day, that an increased women's role has led to something positive for everybody—woman, family, community."

Have the women committees been effective during their nascent existence? Let each community be the judge of their efficiency and effectiveness, but let it also be known that Jordan's women have been, at the very least, active. Their record thus far, boasts the



HRH Princess Basma, chairperson of the Jordanian National Committee for Women Friday announces the achievement of the legal status of Jordan's Women Committees as a non-governmental organisation; below, the logo of the new Jordanian National Forum for Women (Photo above by Youssef Al 'Allan)



following achievements:

—Continuing education programmes in health, education and politics in all governorates;

—Literacy classes for women;

—The creation of scholarships for needy women in higher education

—The appointment of 99 women to the municipal councils in 1994, 80 of whom belonged to local women's committees;

—Several of these women prepared the budget of their communities for 1995 and for the first time, environmental issues were put on the agenda of several councils;

—The election of 10 women to municipal councils; six of whom were committee members;

—The election, for the first time in Jordan's history, of a woman as mayor of a municipality; and

—A change in maternity leave legislation earlier this year increasing the leave allowance from one month to three months.

"The municipal elections were demonstrative of a large change of attitude in

what you would call conservative areas," said Ms. Hindawi. "Men elected women to serve on local councils. We are still in the beginning stages of our efforts, but when you see the slightest gradual changes, it tells women they are on the right track."

The onus now, says Ms. Murad, is on pushing for greater acceptance and participation of women in decision-making positions.

"We see that women can be an effective pressure group through the change in some

legislation," she continued, "although we still have things to accomplish in terms of legislation."

"But also we need to share in decision-making more often at the higher levels." We have several women working in lower and middle levels (of employment) but we do need women in higher decision making levels," she said.

In any case, she said, shortcomings for women may still be many, but "we can't discount our achievements."

Convicted child rapist/killer executed

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A 47-year-old man was hanged at Swaga prison south of Amman at dawn Thursday for the rape and murder of a Zarqa child last March.

The execution was the sixth carried out in the Kingdom in the past three months.

Shelish Mahmoud Shelish was sentenced to death on May 7 by the Criminal Court after being found guilty of raping, sodomising then killing, Samar Ghoussein, a nine-year-old Zarqa Camp girl during the month of Ramadan.

According to court documents, the convict, a service driver in Zarqa, lured Samar, a fifth grade student at the United Nation's Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) school in Zarqa camp, into a wooden area in

Yajouz on the afternoon of Feb. 23, and raped her.

The child started bleeding and screaming, the document said, adding that she threatened the convict and told him "my family will kill you and they will tell the police."

In his testimony to police, Mr. Shelish, who pleaded not guilty to both charges, admitted that he tried to stop the bleeding after the rape, but failed, and said he had no choice but to kill Samar, by strangulation, to conceal his crime.

The convict said he placed Samar's body in the trunk of his car and dumped it in a valley near Abu Alia area in Tabarbour.

The child's body was found the following day by a shepherd after her family notified police of her disappearance.

The convict, who is married to two women and has

two children ages seven and eight, told the authorities that he went back to Zarqa and bought some groceries, went home and ate breakfast with his family, then changed his clothes and went back to work.

Efforts by the convict's attorney to settle the case with the victim's family last September failed.

A Royal Decree was issued in September approving the death sentence of the convict after his case was reviewed twice at the Court of Cassation which approved the ruling of the Criminal Court.

The Court of Cassation in September protested the ruling of the Criminal Court which handed convict Shelish one execution sentence for both the rape and murder of the child, instead of two execution sentences.

Rawabdeh rejects rumours of government limitations on public freedoms, democracy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh has denied rumours that Jordan was lowering the ceiling of public freedoms and that the government of Jordan was exercising pressure on opposition groups in the country.

In an interview with the Qatari Rayah daily, the minister said opposition parties in Jordan have failed to win over the support of the man in the street or to closely involve people in the activities of political parties.

These parties, he charged, have resorted in some cases to undemocratic methods to assert their views. He further said the enforcement of the law does not mean a retreat from the path of

democracy.

Mr. Rawabdeh said the government was continuing to act democratically and through the application of the law. But, he said, others are applying undemocratic means to voice their opinions and that these, in particular, need to be stopped.

Many of those who keep bragging about public freedoms believe they are above the law and should not be asked to account for their actions, and this contradicts democratic principles, the minister said.

Referring to the press and publications law, Mr. Rawabdeh said the government has no intention of amending that law but would contemplate the idea of amending it should violations and excesses in the media continue.

Mr. Rawabdeh also referred to the contacts that have been going on between Amman and Damascus for the release of tens of Jordanian political prisoners held in Syrian jails.

He said contacts have failed so far to bring about results, but that efforts will continue.

He urged Jordanian political parties to assist the government in its endeavours on that track.

As to the fate of jailed Jordanians accused of selling property to Israel, the minister said this was a legal, not political issue. Should Jordanian courts decide that their imprisonment is no longer viable following the peace treaty with Israel, then the government will set them free, Mr. Rawabdeh asserted.

Former senate member passes away

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Al Lawzi Friday mourned the death of the late Ali Mutlaq Al Hababeh, former senate member, who passed away on Friday.

Jordan, Sudan agree on cultural exchange programme

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Sudan Thursday signed an agreement for an executive programme of cultural and scientific cooperation for the years 1995-1997, covering cultural, education, information, health, archaeological and social development fields.

Under the programme, both countries agreed to

exchange educational expertise and information on educational systems, in addition to granting scholarships to students to study at higher education institutions in both countries.

The two sides will also exchange cultural publications, and visits by press delegations from both countries.

The two sides also agreed to initiate interchange between social security corporations and women's unions.

In the area of health, they agreed to the exchange of health training and hospital management expertise, maintenance of medical equipment and marketing medicines produced in both

countries.

In archaeology, the two sides agreed to hold training courses in the restoration of archaeological sites.

The agreement was signed by Ministry of Planning Secretary General Nabil Ammani and by the Sudanese Ambassador to Jordan Ali Abdul Rahman Numeiri.

Debate focuses on need to upgrade quality of local economic reporting

By Lola Kellani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Economists and journalists agreed on Wednesday that the Jordanian media was lacking in analytical skills in the reporting of economic events, and stressed the need for the establishment of financial newspapers.

These views were launched during a round-table debate held at the International and Islamic Centre for Studies and Information to discuss the role of the media in its coverage of economic events and the performance of the media in reporting on Jordan's economic policies.

Participating economists, academicians, former ministers as well as representatives from the Chamber of Industry and the Businessmen's Association, criticised the media as an information mechanism.

Participating economists said the press in general project one point of view, which is the government's view," regarding Jordan's

economic policies. "Jordan is carrying out a structural adjustment programme, (but) until now we have not witnessed any opposing opinions in the press," said Yakoub Suleiman, a lecturer of economics at the University of Applied Science.

Such economical policies, he added, should be explained to citizens since these policies affect their lives.

Adel Shamsayleh, a financial analyst, said any formal economic events covered by the media "tend to be exaggerated."

He added that such reporting may sometimes backfire.

Citing examples from the Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit, which was held in Amman in October, some participating economists argued that the means through which the media handled the event were somewhat "misleading."

Their arguments stated too much hype was projected in the press in anticipa-

tion of the summit, leading citizens to believe that benefits were to be delivered immediately.

They also argued that the media was "superficial" and that its coverage barely scratches the surface of economic issues, and that it was confined to reports on "who opened what."

"Financial reports tend to lack detail and facts" said Waleed Khatib, president of Amman Chamber of Industry.

Journalists explained that tackling Jordan's economic situation in the printed press, such as the high rate of unemployment, the dinar's market fluctuations, the structural adjustment programme, and the World Bank's activities in the Kingdom were often interpreted by authorities, as bordering on national security matters.

"When analysing economic issues in the printed press, we (journalists) feel we are tackling taboos," said Khalid Zubeidi, economic editor at the Arabic daily Al Ra'i, who was one

of two journalists attending the meeting.

Participants stressed the need for the establishment of serious financial and economy newspapers.

These newspapers, they stressed, may be able to fill the gap which current publications lack and will have significant economic information as well as analysis "weather negative or positive."

Hamdi Tabba'a, chairman of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association, said that with globalisation and access to international information, Jordan's media should pull its act together to produce quality economic news.

"We (Jordanian businessmen) should be able to read about Jordan's economic environment from specialised local newspapers."

"For the time being," Mr. Tabba'a said, "we will continue to read foreign newspapers to understand where we stand in the international market."



BEETLE HAZARD: Children hop a dangerous but somewhat scenic 'joy ride' through the tree-lined roads inside the Sports City Friday (Photo by Youssef Al 'Allan)

هنا عندنا التحصيل

Protest against French N-tests mounts; ambassadors recalled

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — The Swedish Green Party called on the government Thursday to recall its ambassador to Paris to protest against France's nuclear testing programme.

Swedish Green Party spokesman Birger Schlaug made the statement Thursday, one day after France exploded its fifth nuclear bomb on the Mururoa Atoll in the current series in the South Pacific.

"Swedish membership in the European Union should not be a reason for Sweden to abandon its previously critical policy against nuclear testing," Mr. Schlaug said. Sweden joined the EU in January 1995.

"France's actions are a provocation beyond comparison. The move is similar to a terrorist action which threatens both people's health and a sensitive environment," Mr. Schlaug said.

The Swedish government Thursday condemned the French nuclear test. "It is very regrettable that France chooses to end the year with a new nuclear test," Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen said in a statement.

"As we now move into 1996, I hope that a comprehensive test ban treaty will soon be a reality. France has agreed to sign such an agreement, which will prohibit nuclear testing forever," the statement read.

The test was the second-to-last to be conducted in the South Pacific, part of a French programme to test the country's nuclear arsenal ahead of the worldwide test ban and to allow it to prepare simulators.

Meanwhile, France shrugged off Thursday a new wave of world outrage

sparked by its fifth nuclear test in the South Pacific, saying it is in any case near to ending the controversial blasts.

As Paris' European allies again joined countries like Australia, New Zealand and Japan in condemning the tests, French officials reiterated that the tests are scheduled to finish by the end of February.

"We are approaching the end of the campaign," said foreign ministry spokesman Yves Dautriaux, after the latest, 30 kilotonne blast Wednesday night.

"France has already indicated that once this series of tests is over we will sign the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, which is being negotiated in Geneva and in which we are playing a decisive role," he said.

The test at 2130 GMT Wednesday was announced in a terse defence ministry statement reiterating simply that it was aimed at developing simulation techniques for future laboratory tests.

With a power equal to less than 30,000 tonnes of TNT, it was one of the smallest so far since the blasts were resumed in September, ending a moratorium announced in 1992 by former Socialist head of state Francois Mitterrand.

President Jacques Chirac, who came to power in May, has refused to bow to international pressure, including a recent U.N. resolution, to stop the tests. Only China is also continuing to carry out tests.

Mr. Chirac has pledged to end the tests ahead of their original schedule — before the end of February — but it is unclear whether the blasts will number six or seven in

total.

Mr. Dautriaux clarified this Thursday. "This element of uncertainty can be explained because it will depend on the results obtained from the tests already carried out. A decision will be taken in due course," he said.

Protests about the latest blast were however swift, with French ambassadors being summoned in a number of capitals.

In Sydney Acting Prime Minister Kim Beazley described the action as reckless and arrogant. "I call on the French government to make a fresh start to 1996 by immediately ending its nuclear weapons tests," he said.

In Washington a U.S. State Department spokeswoman said: "The United States regrets this action and we continue to urge all nuclear powers including France to refrain from any further nuclear tests."

Several of France's European Union allies were unguarded in their protests, with statements by Austria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden hours after the blast. Switzerland and Russia also reaffirmed their opposition to tests.

In a spectacle which has become familiar worldwide this autumn, ecological protesters burned an effigy of Chirac in front of the French embassy in Rome.

The tests resumed on Sept. 5 at the Mururoa and Fangataufa atolls in the South Pacific. Other tests took place on Oct. 2, Oct. 27 and Nov. 21, sparking similar waves of world protest to that seen Thursday.

France's charge d'affaires in Australia, Alain Mauroy, said after being called in to the foreign affairs department in Canberra that the protests were nothing new.

"This is a language that we heard since the very beginning so we are very much accustomed to that," he said.

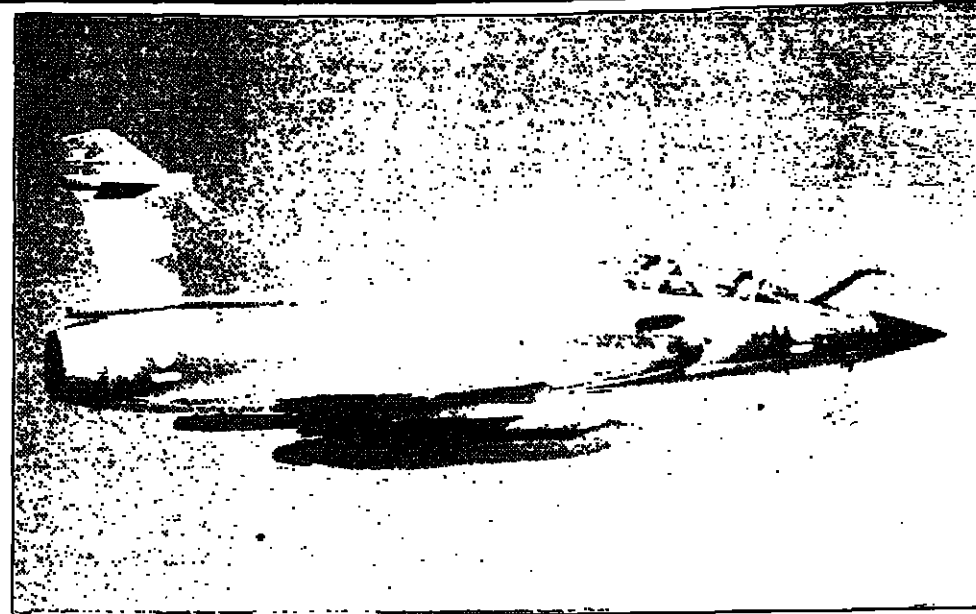
The timing of the new blast led to some comment — reports had indicated that it had initially been scheduled for Dec. 22, but was postponed because Mr. Chirac was facing a political crisis at home over economic policy.

"It seemed to me outrageous France should have paid regard to pre-Christmas spirit in Paris and the strikes and all, but we were paying absolutely no regard to the universal opinion in this part of the world that no more nuclear testing should take place," said Acting Australian Foreign Minister Gordon Bilkey.

In a related development Thursday, the French Air Force confirmed it is replacing the last of its ageing Mirage IV P nuclear bombers with newer models next year, a year ahead of schedule.

An Air Force spokesman confirmed a report in the daily Le Monde that the old jets, at the forefront of its nuclear deterrent for more than 30 years, will be replaced by Mirage 2000 N aircraft by the end of July 1996.

He said their withdrawal from service had been brought forward by a year on the original schedule, but gave no explanation for this.



Mirage 2000 N which will replace the ageing French Mirage IV next year (AFP photo)

Solar Temple police were under internal probe — source

PARIS (AFP) — Two French police officers involved in the latest Order Of The Solar Temple deaths had undergone an internal investigation for belonging to the shadowy sect, a police source said Thursday.

Jean-Pierre Lardanchet and Patrick Rostan, whose charred bodies were among 16 discovered at the weekend in woods outside a village in southeastern France, appeared to their partners to be "cops like any others," a police source said.

"They did their work like everyone else. They were not unusual in any respect,"

said the source at French National Police headquarters.

They had been investigated for belonging to the Swiss-based sect after an earlier grisly set of deaths, in October 1994, the source said.

On that occasion 53 Solar Temple members were killed or committed suicide in what appeared to be coordinated actions in Switzerland and the Canadian province of Quebec.

Both detectives had testified as witnesses after the 1994 deaths, which prompted the internal inquiry.

As the police investiga-

tion turned up nothing that could be held against them, however, no action was taken, the source added.

In the latest tragedy, Lardanchet and another man are suspected of killing fellow members of the doomsday sect before killing themselves outside the village of Saint-Pierre-de-Cherennes, where the charred bodies were found.

"They were rather reserved in their behaviour," the source said, and they carried out their professional duties "in a normal manner."

U.S. touts deportation record, warns of alien smuggling

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States announced a record number of deportations for 1995 Thursday, but officials are warning that curbing the growing trade in alien smuggling will require a global effort.

The number of U.S. "removals" for 1995 was up 15 per cent to 51,600 from 1994 — a whopping 75 per cent increase from 1990, according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

"For too long we have allowed violators of our immigration laws to remain in this country by failing to dedicate the resources necessary to removing them," said Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick in releasing the report.

She added, however, that President Bill Clinton has turned that tradition around and Thursday's report shows his efforts have "paid off."

Most of those deported this year — 62 per cent — were criminals who entered the United States illegally and were expelled after serving their sentences. Last year's figure represents a huge jump from the four per cent that category represented 10 years ago.

Immigration agents are also turning away record numbers of people trying to cross over U.S. borders, with 9,400 sent back in 1995 against 5,669 the previous year.

But once safely across, most aliens manage to stay in the United States. More than 90 per cent of the illegal immigrants deported are picked up at the border, according to the INS.

Moreover, an annual 50,000 deportations are unlikely to make a real dent in the some four million undocumented aliens living in the United States, a population which grows by about 200,000 a year.

Concern here is also mounting over the growing trade in alien smuggling.

The White House said Thursday it was reviewing another unreleased report from the INS and the State Department raising the alarm about the increase in the traffic of human cargo and recommending a massive global effort to stop it.

Wednesday, U.S. officials reported a major breakthrough in the fight against

alien-smuggling with the arrest of Gloria Canales, the suspected mastermind behind a major operation that smuggled thousands of Asian and Latin American immigrants into the United States.

A task force from various U.S. agencies and foreign governments is actively pursuing similar cases but the INS report on smuggling warned that corruption abroad has hobbled crackdown efforts.

Moscow has become a major transit hub for illegal immigrants, with some 200,000 aliens awaiting departure at any given time, according to an account of the report in the Washington Post.

Anti-immigrant sentiments have been on the rise in the United States and the Republican-led Congress is considering a measure that would usher in sweeping restrictions on both legal and illegal immigration.

The legislation calls for beefing up the nation's borders with 5,000 additional immigration officers over five years, and would make illegals ineligible for nearly all federal benefits, such as food and housing assistance.

Last year, California passed a bill barring illegal aliens from receiving benefits and keeping their children out of public schools.

A judge ruled that portions of "Proposition 187" clashed with superseding federal laws but Republican Governor Pete Wilson has vowed to take the matter all the way to the Supreme Court.

Gov. Wilson's support for the measure had been a decisive factor in his 1994 reelection campaign and immigration is likely to take the front seat in next year's presidential election.

Arthur Helton with the Open Society Institute predicts that the debate will cool after the vote.

"The immigration issue is driven by presidential politics but it will recede from the national agenda and some more thoughtful policy can be implemented," said Mr. Helton.

He added, however, that immigration will continue to be a hot topic in the heavily impacted states such as California and Florida.

Rebels threaten to kill one hostage a day unless ransom paid

COTABATO, Philippines (AFP) — Muslim rebels holding 14 people hostage in the Southern Philippines have threatened to kill one captive a day starting Saturday unless a 1.5 million-peso (\$58,000) ransom is paid, officials said Friday.

Of the 14 hostages, six are children, aged six to 12.

Mayor Sam Loco of Sebu Town, where the vacationers were abducted by the secessionist Abu Sayyaf Wednesday, said a Muslim negotiator had come down from the mountains where the captives are being held and relayed the threat.

He did not say whether the government would give in to the demands. Manila

has a policy of not paying ransoms, but negotiators in previous abductions are known to have paid amounts to kidnappers for "board and lodging."

Sebu Town police Chief Senior Inspector Jun Ilisan said 14 people were being held by members of the extremist group, correcting earlier reports by an army officer that only 10 people were being held hostage.

Mr. Ilisan said 20 people, who were on an excursion, were originally seized by about 30 heavily armed men in Sebu, famous for its natural springs, but four were freed and two escaped.

The captives include members of the family of Rodilen Lacap, who had

gone to the area along with friends from the nearby city of General Santos.

Mr. Lacap's wife, Victoria, who was among those released, said the abductors were speaking a local Muslim dialect and were armed with assault rifles and anti-tank weapons.

The Abu Sayyaf, known for their ruthlessness, plundered the largely Christian town of Ipi in the south last April, razing homes and buildings and killing 53 people. The group has also been blamed for a spate of ransom kidnappings and anti-Christian bomb attacks in the south since 1992.

Camilla covets royal title

LONDON (AFP) — Prince Charles' mistress is troling for a new title and it is "her royal highness," according to "senior government sources" quoted by the Daily Express newspaper Thursday. The tabloid said Camilla Parker-Bowles is determined to marry the prince and become his consort, and adds that she says she is tired of concealing their relationship in secret. Senior figures in the government and the Church of England see the prospect of a possible marriage to Parker-Bowles with unease, fearing it could undermine the sovereign's popularity and his role as head of the Church of England. According to the report, Parker-Bowles, who recently divorced, was "infuriated" by Prince Charles' announcement last week that he would never remarry after a divorce from Diana. The issue of prince Charles' long-standing relationship with Parker-Bowles has been the subject of even hotter debate than usual in Britain since last week, when Queen Elizabeth II was reported to have told Prince Charles and the princess of Wales that she wanted them to divorce. Prince Charles has concurred, but Princess Diana has yet to reply.

Pole reaches second pole in same year

WARSAW (AFP) — Polish explorer Marek Kaminski has reached the South Pole on his own, becoming the first man to walk unassisted to both ends of the earth within a year, Polish Radio said Wednesday. Kaminski, 31, who is also a philosopher and businessman from Gdansk, reached the southern tip of earth overnight Tuesday, having walked solo for more than 1,400 kilometres in 53 days, the radio said. It had taken him 71 days to reach the North Pole in May, accompanied by countryman Wojciech Moskalski but, again, with no en-route assistance such as air drops. Setting off from Berkner Island, Kaminski managed to cover an average of 30 kilometres a day, dragging 120 kilograms of supplies on a sleigh. Though it is summer in the southern hemisphere, Kaminski had to cope with strong winds, blizzards and temperatures of minus 30 degrees Celsius (minus 22 Fahrenheit).

The Boss to hit the road solo

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The bossman is headed back on the road. Bruce Springsteen announced plans to resume his first solo acoustic road show with dates for U.S. and Canadian audiences in January. After that, Springsteen is headed for a two-month tour of Europe. Springsteen will play small venues alone. Springsteen's most extensive tour since 1992 resumes in Montreal on January 7, with dates to follow in Toronto, New Orleans and other U.S. cities. It is scheduled to continue in Europe in late February through early April.

'Nobody tops Elvis'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Marilyn Monroe is popular, but nobody tops Elvis. That is the loose interpretation from figures released by the U.S. postal service this week. Stamps for 1995 bearing Monroe's likeness were the service's best-selling for the year, with 46.3 million copies sold. The 1993 Elvis Presley stamp still holds the record with a whopping 124 million copies sold.



Italian supporters of the green Verdi party burn a poster of the French President Jacques Chirac in front of the French embassy (AFP photo)

China lashes out at U.S., EU for protests over jailing of dissident

BEIJING (AFP) — China lashed out Friday at the U.S. Congress and European Union (EU) for criticising its jailing of dissident Wei Jingsheng, warning that their "malicious" statements could harm bilateral relations.

National People's Congress Standing Committee member and Foreign Affairs Committee Vice Chairman Zhou Jue said the Dec. 13 sentencing of Mr. Wei, 45, for trying to subvert the government "is purely an internal affair of China and is entirely justified" under the country's law.

China's best-known dissident lost his appeal Thursday against his 14-year term, despite protests and appeals for clemency from western governments and human rights groups.

"The unwarranted accusations and attacks made by some people in the U.S. Congress and the EU have naturally aroused the utmost indignation and opposition of the Chinese people," said Mr. Zhou, adding that the

"malicious moves" constituted a serious interference in China's internal affairs.

"They violated international norms and will do harm to the healthy development of normal relations between nations," he added, indirectly accusing the U.S. Congress and EU of holding up Mr. Wei as a "human rights fighter" to further their "ulterior motives" of creating instability in China.

"Wei is a thoroughgoing, proven criminal offender, rather than an ideological or political criminal, still less a so-called 'human rights fighter'," Mr. Zhou said, adding that he had not only made speeches and plotted to subvert the government "but also indulged in concrete actions."

"What he wanted to do is to upset China's current political stability and economic development, and thereby destroy the construction achievements and happy lives of the Chinese people and finally push them back into the abyss of

misery," he said.

"It is not difficult for U.S. to perceive the aims of some politicians in the United States and some other western countries who have held Wei up as a 'human rights fighter,'" he added.

The Chinese people have a "sober perception" of their intention to interfere in other countries' internal affairs by supporting certain persons or forces, Mr. Zhou said, adding that "their schemes will never succeed."

Mr. Wei, a 1995 Nobel Peace Prize nominee, was released from prison in September 1993 after serving all but six months of a 15-year sentence for counter-revolutionary activities. He was rearrested six months later and held incommunicado before being formally charged in November.

Meanwhile, pro-democracy activists led by members of Hong Kong's Legislative Council staged a protest here Thursday after

a Beijing court dismissed Mr. Wei's appeal against a 14-year jail sentence.

Prominent Democratic Party legislator Szeto Wah and other activists chanted slogans and held banners condemning the rejection earlier of Mr. Wei's appeal by the Beijing Higher People's Court after only 10 minutes of deliberations.

The court simply confirmed the 14-year jail term for conspiring against the government imposed by the Intermediate People's Court on Dec. 13.

Mr. Wei has no further right of appeal, although under Chinese law he could become eligible for parole after seven years.

On the eve of Mr. Wei's appeal, China published a government white paper on human rights that laid unusual emphasis on the use of "counter-revolutionary" laws.

The verdict came as China's parliament endorsed a panel to set up Hong Kong's first government under Chinese rule.



Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu during his tour of flood-ravaged Edendale township greets relatives of those killed in a Christmas day cloudburst (AFP photo)

More bodies recovered from flooded S. African river

PIETERMARITZBURG, South Africa (AFP) — Overnight rains brought another 16 bodies to the surface of the Umsindusi River here early Friday police said, bringing the official toll from a Christmas day flashflood to 140.

Police revised the death toll downwards from an earlier 150 after they found that a number of bodies they had counted in the mortuaries earlier were not those of flood victims.

More than 200 people were reported missing after the Umsindusi burst its banks in a cloudburst Monday and raged through shanty settlements in Edendale black township on the edge of this Kwazulu-

Natal provincial capital.

Police spokesman Superintendent Henry Budhrum Friday said police believed some of the missing persons had taken shelter in relief camps set up in the city and had yet to be traced by their families.

"We hope to account for all the missing persons by this weekend," Mr. Budhrum said, adding that police would continue searching the river for more bodies.

Health authorities, meanwhile, have issued public warnings not to drink water from the river, saying the receding flood waters contained a serious risk of cholera and typhoid.

At the same time, relief

workers urged survivors of the flood not to rebuild on the river's floodplain but rather to use serviced sites made available by the Pietermaritzburg city council.

Scores of people Thursday alarmed officials by returning to the muddy banks of the river to begin reconstructing their shanties, using materials salvaged from the floodwaters.

One man, who was erecting a shanty on the site where his home stood before the flood, told reporters that he was aware of the dangers but that he had no choice.

"I'm not a stupid man but I'm desperate," the man said.

Town clerk Ian Cross said 1,500 people were being catered for at shelters by army, prisons and relief agencies personnel.

The area was visited Thursday by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who consoled relatives of those killed in the Christmas day deluge and offered words of comfort to survivors.

Rev. Tutu also donated money, food and provisions on behalf of the Anglican Church to the flood victims.

Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, after a visit Wednesday to Edendale, declared it a national disaster area and announced government aid of one million rand (\$280,000).

American Airlines acknowledges pilot error may have been crash cause

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Pilots chatted about work and neglected landing procedures just before their jet crashed in Colombia killing 160, CBS reported Thursday, as American Airlines said human error may have caused the disaster.

"We are saddened that human error on the part of our people may have contributed to the accident," a statement by American Airlines Vice President C.D. Ewell said.

"The accident reminds U.S. that aviation, while not inherently dangerous, is terribly unforgiving of any inattention to detail."

The jet that set out from Miami, Florida December 20 for Cali, Colombia, with 164 people on board. Four people survived the mountainside crash.

CBS Television reported Thursday that flight recorder data showed that nine seconds before impact, the pilots tried to bring the nose of the plane back up after the alarm went off signalling that it was flying too low.

But the statement said the maneuver failed because the wing flaps, which had been put into the descent position for landing, were locked into place and the pilots were unable to reverse them.

"The final 30 minutes of American Airlines flight 964's black box recordings have been reviewed," the statement said. "There is no sign the pre-landing procedures list was

gone through. There is no sign the approach procedures list was gone through. There are no signs of engine trouble on the plane's systems.

"There are no signs the aircraft was hit by any hostile external action," the statement added. "There are no signs that on-ground radio guidance systems were not in working order."

"The flight recorder data show that just south of Tolua (a town near the crash site), as the descent continued, the crew selected ULQ (a flight guidance position code for Tolua) ... and the jet shifted to the left (eastward) for about 90 seconds."

"During the shift, the crew was talking about getting back into a central line of approach and selecting a trajectory that would take it straight towards the Rojo radio control tower. But 'the flight recorder data showed that the descent continued and the pilots automatic operation mode shifted to HDG-SEL (automatic course selector) after which the jet veered to the right (southwest), the last thing that appears on the flight recorder."

"The stick shaker alarm continued to go off during the maneuver to recover (altitude) to avoid ground impact. (but) the wing flaps remained locked in descent mode until the end of the recording."

Dispute between Japan and S. Korea looms over tiny island

SEOUL (AFP) — A dispute loomed between South Korea and Japan Friday over a tiny, but not-forgotten island when both countries said they might claim exclusivity over 321 kilometres of their coastal waters.

"Recently we received a report that Japan will declare an exclusive economic zones (EEZ) immediately after its parliament

ratifies the U.N. Convention of the Law of the Sea, a South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said here.

"Following this report we have been giving intense consideration to declaring our own EEZ," the spokesman said as television stations showed old film of navy patrol boats dropping Korean markers into the Japan Sea, known

here as the East Sea.

China, the spokesman added, had also been prompted by Japan's move to consider a similar declaration.

Should Japan and China both declare the 321-km EEZ, the dispute over Tok-Do (Lone Island) — known as Takeshima — in Japan, in the Japan (eastern sea) is expected to be rekindled, Yonhap news agency said.

Disputes between China and Korea in the Yellow Sea over already thorny fishing rights problems would also be likely to flare, Yonhap said.

Only a couple of South Korean families, who took up residence in the 1980s, live on Tok-Do, which is little more than a bleak twin mountain peak.

22 more killed in S. Africa's Kwazulu-Natal province

DURBAN, South Africa (AFP) — Another 22 people were killed in criminal and political violence in South Africa's troubled eastern province of Kwazulu-Natal overnight, police said Friday.

The latest bloodletting brings to more than 175 the number of people murdered in the province in the past two weeks, according to police statistics.

Police spokesman Superintendent Bala Naidoo said among the latest victims was a policeman who was killed in a shootout with a man arrested near port Shepstone, 110 kilome-

tres south of this Indian Ocean city.

Mr. Naidoo said most of the other killings Thursday and early Friday, in various parts of the province, appear to be criminally-motivated.

In the worst incident in the past week, 14 people were killed on Christmas day when more than 600 Zulus, armed with spears, axes and guns, swept through Shoba Shobane rural area near Port Shepstone, burning houses and attacking residents.

Mr. Naidoo said Friday no arrests had yet been made in connection with the massacre but that police were

making good progress in tracking down the killers.

Police Commissioner George Fivaz and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki Wednesday sent a team of investigators to probe the Christmas day killings and two other massacres near Port Shepstone.

About 150 extra police and troops have also been deployed in the area, police said.

Those responsible for the Shoba Shobane killings are believed to be supporters of the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), which is engaged in a bitter power struggle with President

Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC).

Feuding between the two sides has seen more than 14,000 people killed in Kwazulu-Natal in the past decade.

Violence monitors said this week that the Christmas period traditionally sees a sharp rise in violence in Kwazulu-Natal as migrant workers in mines and factories around Johannesburg return home for the holidays.

Tuesday, 15 more people were killed in two separate attacks in the province, 10 of them in a clash between two feuding Zulu clans.

Germany comes to Croatia's aid over charges of human rights abuses

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — Germany is scrambling to downplay the potential impact of a draft resolution that would condemn Croatia for human rights abuses, diplomats said.

Germany already has succeeded in putting off until next week at the earliest any possible Security Council action on the thorny topic and was doing its utmost to tone down the content of the text being drawn up, council members said.

Members have had since Dec. 22 a report from U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali detailing a long list of human rights violations committed during and after the Croatian army's retaking of Krajina, a region separatist ethnic Serbs held until August.

The report voices concern over subsequent lack of respect for Serbs' rights, as well as at the some 200,000 refugees sent fleeing and others who remained behind vulnerable to abuses.

Russia, which leads the Security Council until mid-night Sunday, has tried to speed up discussion on the report in New York with the resolution condemning Zagreb looming.

"All (council) members agree that there should be a reaction to this report," said Russian Ambassador Sergei Lavrov. But that will not happen until January, he

said.

Members who took part in Thursday's consultations said Germany, an ally of Zagreb, has shown its preference for a simple council statement on Croatia. Last week, the council condemned in a resolution the Bosnian Serbs for atrocities committed in July in the eastern enclave of Srebrenica.

German envoy Antonius Eitel said rights violations in Croatia could not be put on a par with those in Bosnia.

In the report on Croatia, the U.N. chief cited thousands of cases of arson and looting in Krajina, as well as arbitrary arrests, harass-

ment of Serbs and more than 150 suspicious deaths. It said many people had been shot in the head, including the elderly.

Mr. Lavrov said there were proposals on a resolution that would condemn Croatia, noting that "some members believe that there might be a (council) presidential statement," which packs less weight than a resolution.

The United States, as is Germany, is perceived as close to the Croats and has worked against any condemnation of Zagreb that would entail U.N. sanctions.

Zaire to start acting against extremists in Rwandan camps

GENEVA (AFP) — Zairean troops will begin acting in the next two months against Hutu extremists in the first Rwandan refugee camps scheduled for closure, a U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees official said Thursday.

The official said the camps held more than 200,000 refugees but asked for them not to be identified in order not to jeopardise the operation.

The UNHCR estimates that a third of the camp residents would agree to go back to Rwanda and a third would be taken to other camps, while those who still refused to budge would be left to fend for themselves.

A meeting would be held here in two months to evaluate the situation, the official said.

A Dec. 20 meeting of officials of Zaire, Rwanda and the UNHCR resulted in Kinshasa lifting its threat to expel by force those refugees on Zairean soil who remained at the end of the year.

Instead voluntary returns

would be encouraged in particular by acting against Hutu extremists who were preventing the refugees from going home and gradually closing the camps.

The refugees fled Rwanda in mid-1994 after massacres by Hutu militia of minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus were followed by the seizure of power by a Hutu-led guerrilla movement, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR).

A UNHCR official also said that Rwanda had demanded that High Commissioner Sadako Ogata recall her special representative for Central Africa's great lakes region where more than two million Rwandans are still in exile.

A letter from Kigali seeking the recall of Carol Faubert was handed to Ms. Ogata by Rwanda's Minister For Rehabilitation Patrick Mazimbuka at the Dec. 20 meeting here.

The letter accused Mr. Faubert of hindering the repatriation of the refugees from camps in Zaire,

Burundi and Tanzania by displaying a negative and sometime aggressive attitude to Kigali's policy in this respect in his actions and remarks.

The official said Rwanda's demand that Mr. Faubert be replaced by someone more amenable was rejected by the agency and negotiations were under way to maintain him in his post.

The UNHCR believes fear of reprisals by the new Tutsi authorities when they return is proving a major deterrent to the refugees. Many of those who have already gone back have been denounced as responsible for atrocities and thrown into overcrowded jails to await trial by a judicial system that has virtually collapsed.

The FPR government has recently expelled dozens of international humanitarian organisations and only grudgingly accepted the extension of the mandate of the U.N. aid mission in Rwanda to the end of March.

Yeltsin back in Kremlin after heart trouble more than two months ago

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin returned to the Kremlin Friday for the first time since suffering acute heart trouble more than two months ago and recorded a

new year's address to the nation.

The presidential press service said Mr. Yeltsin, 64, strolled through the grounds of his headquarters in central Moscow after arriving

from a country residence at Barvikha, in a secluded wooded area just west of the capital.

"He is now in the studio recording the new year's

message," the press service said.

Interfax news agency said Mr. Yeltsin chatted with tourists and Muscovites in the Kremlin grounds, but it gave no details.

Earlier, ITAR-TASS news agency said he planned to return to the Kremlin to record the new year's address, which is due to be broadcast Sunday.

Chun put on oxygen after losing consciousness

SEOUL (AFP) — Jailed former South Korean President Chun Doo-Hwan was put on oxygen and fed intravenously Friday after losing consciousness on the 27th day of a hunger strike, hospital authorities said.

He lamented his failure to be able to continue his fast to Sunday — the end of the year — blaming it on severe diarrhoea he developed after drinking rice-washed water in a bid to endure as long as possible, they said.

"Mr. Chun fell into a serious condition this morning as a result of severe dehydration. We immediately put him on oxygen and started feeding him intravenously," Lee Kwon-Jun, a senior doctor said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية المستقلة

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 6843111, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Healthy precedent

REGARDLESS OF the results that the Consumer Protection Society (CPS) will achieve in its campaign to bring down the prices of coffee, it has set a precedent that will bode extremely well for society and consumers.

The CPS launched the campaign to boycott coffee after merchants refused to lower its prices to a level that would correspond with the price of the commodity in the international market. The merchants might or might not heed the demands, depending on the response the campaign would receive from Jordanian consumers. So far, the consumers have responded positively and some merchants are complaining from low sales.

But the campaign would be a success event if it stops at this point. Its success should not be measured solely by the results it will achieve. The significance of the Consumer Protection Society's action lies in the clear message it sends about the growth of civic societies in Jordan. What the campaign bespeaks is that the Jordanian civic society has reached a stage of maturity with which comes teeth that can bite those who disregard the interests of society and the needs of its members. As such, the campaign to boycott coffee should be supported by all groups and individuals who are concerned with the development of Jordan and its civic institutions.

The other issue that the campaign highlighted is the role of the government in the economy. The call for boycotting coffee was launched after the Ministry of Supply failed to force the merchants to bring down the prices of coffee. Some might argue that the government should not be expected to play this role. A sound argument, but only if the government and its regulations have not contributed to providing merchants with the ability to force their prices on consumers.

The coffee merchants form a cartel with a monopoly on the market. As such, they can manipulate the prices to their benefits with no fear of competition from other suppliers. If the government does not want to protect the consumers through its regulations, it should empower the consumers with the abilities to stand up for their rights on their own. That can only be done through ending all sorts of monopolies and creating a true free market which everybody with the ability to provide a commodity at a better price can enter.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I ARABIC daily commented on the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied West Bank towns, describing the event as marking the end of a black era in the history of the Palestinian people. The withdrawal also means the start of a new era of Palestinian endeavours, as well as hard work, including the election of a legislative assembly and a president on the one hand, and the building of the essential infrastructure for the future Palestinian institutions on the other, said the paper. The withdrawals marked the first and initial stage of the establishment of the independent Palestinian state; but for that to happen, the Palestinian people have to pursue the struggle not in the form of stone throwing or firing on the Israelis but through continuing negotiations aimed at retrieving all the usurped rights and lands and embarking on the construction work, said the daily. Perhaps, said the daily the coming elections scheduled for Jan. 20 will give indications as to where the Palestinians are heading because these elections will show whether or not democracy and political pluralism will reign and offer the people of Palestine the chance to attain the objectives for which they had worked so hard.

MOHAMMAD SUBEIH, a writer in Al Dustour, expressed belief that the Iraqi question could soon be solved through a formula provided by the Arab countries which will put an end to any lingering Iranian ambitious aims and interferences in Iraq's internal affairs, saying that Egypt and Syria had held a summit meeting earlier this week declaring at the end that their views are similar on Iraq's future, the writer said that an Egyptian-Jordanian summit followed with similar results. This means, said the writer, that Syria and Jordan hold similar views about Iraq and that Egypt, Syria and Jordan believe that the Arab World must take the initiative to safeguard Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and help end the sufferings of the Iraqi people.

Jordanian Perspective

By Dr. Musa Keilani

A successful summit

IRAQ AND Syria were the main topics of the Aqaba meeting between His Majesty King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak few days ago. Some other issues were discussed as well, including security and terrorism.

The significance of the Dec. 26 meeting in Aqaba is that it reflected the regional role that Jordan is leading in the area. It was a happy surprise to all of those who were in Aqaba to hear President Mubarak say that his stand on Iraq is identical with the King's views. The King made it clear that Iraq at the moment suffers from a de facto partition, practised on the ground but not officially recognised. Baghdad has its authority on central Iraq and extends to the Mosul in the north and Souq Al Shiouki, and Hilla in the south. Even the recent presidential referendum did not have the Shiite southerners or the Kurdish northerners participating in that referendum, which resulted in 98 per cent support for the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein.

The 32 parallel and 38 parallel are not only no-fly zones imposed by the Security Council. They have become a de facto partition of Iraq into three geographical semi-autonomous entities. Jordan's stand has been misinterpreted by Mr. Mubarak four months ago when Brigadier General Hussein Kamel arrived in Amman.

Egyptian feelers among the Iraqi opposition reported back to Cairo that the opposition conference will take place during January and support for it is reverberating from Tehran to Damascus and to Riyadh.

That was an analytical view of why President Mubarak came to Aqaba to confer with King Hussein about the Iraqi

situation and how Egypt can stop its futile efforts regarding change in Iraq.

As for the discussions on Syria, the King was also open in his stand. Jordan will never be a card in Syrian or anybody else's hands. Jordan, immediately following the Madrid conference in October 1992, extended all goodwill to the Syrians. The Jordanian delegation coordinated with his Syrian counterpart regarding the finest details of negotiating tactics and strategy.

It was only when Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa wanted Jordan to tail behind them that coordination stopped and Jordan then minister of state for foreign affairs, Talal Sataan Al Hassan, came back from Lebanon to report that Syria was trying to impose its hegemony on Jordanians and Palestinians.

The King was referring to this Syrian self-assumed leading role when he repeated in Aqaba what he conveyed to President Hafez Al Assad three years ago that Jordan could not afford to be more patient regarding the negotiation track and Syria could easily afford all manifestations of delaying tactics with the Israelis since it did not have its own people under occupation and did not have its own water resources in jeopardy, which is Jordan's case. Therefore, Jordan has to make sure that total success will meet the Jordanian-Israeli track and as soon as circumstances allow and permit.

To sum up, we can say that the Aqaba summit was more of a success since it managed to overcome the strained relations between the two countries.

Moreover, it signalled that a new page in Arab-Arab coordination on Iraq will be open.

Algeria's socialists ponder poll setback

By Catherine Simon

THE BIG losers in the Nov. 16 Algerian presidential election were the modernist parties, in particular Hocine Ait Ahmed's Socialist Forces Front (SFF) which called for a boycott. Now they are wondering whether they will be able to bounce back in time, as one of their activists said, or are to be condemned to a long exile in the political wilderness.

The fate of those who urged a boycott, the SFF in particular, was sealed by the high voter turnout. This is now giving rise to discussions inside the party. "The empty-chair policy in the end always backfires on those who advocate it," noted an SFF member who disagreed with his party's decision.

Another said: "By not running in the presidential election, SFF general secretary Hocine Ait Ahmed passed up a unique opportunity." In his view, if the SFF had called on the political groups that took part in the Jan. 13 Rome agreement — especially the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) — to support its candidates, it would have "given itself the means to test the sincerity of the Islamists' commitment to democracy and to cut short the FLN's ambiguities."

There is bitterness over

what some SFF members see as a "terrible waste." They say things started to go wrong from the moment the Rome agreement was signed. One member claimed that by signing it "we gave the FIS and the FLN a democratic cover. But we failed to go any further. We have given a lot and got nothing in return. When the government rejected the offer of peace, we should have drawn our conclusion from it. Instead of becoming uptight and digging in our heels, we should have opened up, sounded out the government's more 'enlightened' members and, in particular, worked on the modernists."

Did that mean going in with the Culture and Democracy Rally (RCD) of Ait Ahmed's Kabylie rival, Said Sadi? "The quarrels of zaims (leaders) don't prevent the rank and file from campaigning together. Anyway, there's not only the RCD and the Kabyles. Labour union members, and women's and young men's associations are also part of the modernist wing."

Unhappy with the line the SFF was taking, several of its officials moved away from it as early as last spring, some of them resigning and others suspending participation in party activities. "At the rate things are going," said one member with a sigh, "the

SFF will soon be an empty shell with Ait Ahmed's name writ large over the entrance."

The stormy debates at the SFF national council meeting in early November testified to the prevailing mood of unease.

Though they are anxious to resolve the crisis, the party's apprentice dissidents are being careful. Those who speak out do so only on condition that they are not identified. However, even the most scathing critics say that a putsch is far from their thoughts. Although they complain about their leaders' far from democratic ways and accuse them of forcing their choices on members, they hope to be able to thrash everything out, but strictly within the party in congress.

Is this whiff of rebellion the beginning of a decline or a sign of greater maturity? The history of the SFF, which was founded 30 years ago, suggests the latter. The discipline that prevails, even among critics, points towards the latter. But if there is to be a resolution, it will be a long and painful process. Recent statements by the party's national secretary for emigration, Farid Aissani, saying that the Nov. 16 election "reinforces the SFF in its approach," bode ill for a readiness to accept criticism.

Algeria's modernist movement, still in its infancy and divided, is having a hard time asserting itself on the national scene. Sadi's low poll less than 10 per cent of the vote — testifies to the difficulties. At least it will have helped him to put down his marker for the future and will allow the RCD to remain "visible."

There remains the question of voter motivation. A "district-by-district analysis of the results shows the vote's regionalist character. "Ethnic" preferences prevailed over "democratic" ones. Those who voted RCD, even in Algiers, were for the most part Kabyles.

It was primarily community solidarity that operated in the Kabylie, the stronghold of the SFF and the cradle of the RCD. The "Arabs" did the same in voting for Liamine Zerroul, who is from Batna in the east, and Mahfoud Nahnah, a native of Bida. But by casting their ballots, they seized this total new opportunity that allowed them to exercise their civic rights.

"Here in Algeria we're barely starting our apprenticeship in politics," said a veteran political activist. "Tomorrow, perhaps, we'll get round to democracy."

Le Monde

Political uncertainty stalks post-election Turkey

By Aliza Marcus
Reuter

ISTANBUL — The lack of a clear victor in Turkey's general elections could hinder the much needed reforms unless parties put aside their differences and form a strong coalition to end the political uncertainty.

The narrow win in Sunday's general elections by the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) shocked the conservative and social democratic parties, which have balked at forming a coalition with the religion-based party.

Most analysts say a conservative-led coalition backed by the Left is the only way out for a country grappling with high inflation, yawning deficits and high debt.

Turkey has been rudderless since Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's shaky coalition with the Social Democrats collapsed in September. A minority government she subsequently set up lasted less than two weeks.

The RP won 21.32 per cent at Sunday's vote, closely followed by Mr. Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) and its conservative rival Motherland Party (ANAP) which together won about 40 per cent.

The conservatives' attempts to negotiate an anti-Islamist alliance,

announced at a joint news conference on Tuesday by a smiling Mr. Ciller and ANAP leader Mesut Yilmaz, may not be easy.

Mr. Yilmaz and Mr. Ciller are bitter rivals whose personal animosity came to a head during ugly exchanges in the election campaign.

The fear is that Turkey may be heading for a succession of unstable governments such as those in the 1970s, when there were eight minority or coalition governments in seven years.

The constant power changes hampered government action and were one of the pretexts for a 1980 military coup.

Two left-wing parties which rarely see eye-to-eye with the conservatives are the key to any anti-Islamist alliance.

The DYP's four-year coalition with the social democrats fell apart because of disagreement over the pace and nature of promised economic and social reform.

Above the fray, RP's leader Necmettin Erbakan has struck a conciliatory stance, promising to respect Turkey's fundamental principles and calling on the other parties to rule with him.

"We have no interest in changing the constitution,"

said Mr. Erbakan in a news conference on Tuesday, referring to fears RP wants to institute Islamic law.

And in a statement that may partly explain the Islamists' attraction he said: "RP wants to work for the state and the state exists to help people, to build hospitals, roads."

Since the vote, political columnists have told readers that nearly 80 per cent of those who voted did not back the Islamists although 99 per cent of Turkey's 60 million people are Muslim.

Although no studies have been done of who voted for RP and why, many people interviewed in the week before the elections said they were fed up with the bickering among parties which traditionally ruled Turkey and had lost faith in their ability to deal with the country's ills.

Political analysts say the problems facing Turkey need immediate attention. These include an annual inflation rate of more than 80 per cent and a stumbling privatisation programme.

"The problem is no longer identifying the problem, the problem is to take action," said Umit Firat, the founding member of a small liberal party which did not make it to parliament.

Despite some changes,

many democratic reforms promised by Ms. Ciller's coalition never came about. Limits on workers' rights and freedom of expression stayed on the books.

All-out military attack on Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has quietened cities in the mainly Kurdish southeast, but the region is by no means fully under control.

The failure of the Kurdish party HADEP and a far right party to pass the 10 per cent threshold to qualify for seats means their voice will go unheard.

Kurdish activists say that even without HADEP in parliament, the new government could take up the party's demands, such as a negotiated settlement to the rebel war and lifting bans on Kurdish cultural and political identity.

But the danger is that with HADEP locked out despite getting up to 60 per cent of the vote in some areas of the southeast, more Kurds may lose faith in the political system, giving a boost to the PKK's 11-year rebel war in which more than 18,000 have been killed.

"By blocking HADEP, it makes people leave the legal, political field and turn to violence," said Ahmet Turk, a HADEP candidate.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Region edges closer towards comprehensive peace

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

THE RESUMPTION of the Syrian-Israeli negotiations and the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian lands were among the main topics addressed by the local press last week.

Statements by Israeli and Syrian officials at the start of the American-sponsored negotiations near Washington indicate that the two sides are not only optimistic about the results but that they are also determined to achieve a lasting settlement for the Syrian-Israeli conflict that lasted for decades, according to Al Ra'i daily. Encouraged by the Arab Gulf states' support for its renewed endeavour to reach a settlement with Israel, Syria is moving fast on the negotiations which are assuming an unprecedented seriousness between Tel Aviv and Damascus since the Madrid conference of 1991, said the daily.

For its part, Al Dustour daily referred to Syrian press commentaries which, it said, have lately been focused on the negotiations, welcoming the American-sponsored talks and voicing hope that they will yield very fruitful results. The daily said that Israeli as well as Syrian officials have been expressing optimism over a speedy solution, especially following the assassination of the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that cost the opposition parties in Israel much of their credibility and strengthened the Labour-led Israeli government's stand vis-a-vis the peace process.

Despite the secrecy shrouding the Israeli-Syrian talks that resumed in the United States, expectations are that the two sides are fast approaching a settlement, according to Mohammad Kharoub, a writer in Al Ra'i daily. Syria seems to have been reassured by the American and Israeli governments that the withdrawal from the Golan will take place, while the Israelis seem to have secured guarantees from Washington about Syria's favourable response to signing a peace treaty according to the writer.

Enhancing the feeling of optimism about an imminent settlement, said the writer, was an announcement by the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher about his intention to conduct shuttle diplomacy between Damascus and Tel Aviv in the coming month to overcome any outstanding obstacles in the way of peace.

Hisham Uzeizat, a writer in Al Dustour, said that the Syrian media has paved the ground for the Syrian public to accept the coming peace with Israel by publishing Israeli government statements about Tel Aviv's retreat from its adamant stand vis-a-vis the Golan and by declaring that a peace accord would secure the return of the usurped Syrian territory.

The writer said that the Syrian media, which had earlier reported details of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty and the Palestine Israeli Oslo deals and has not objected to Israeli overtures relations with Arab countries, including Morocco and the Gulf states, has indeed been preparing the Syrian public to accept the coming peace between Israel and Syria.

Commenting on the Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian towns, a writer in Al Dustour said that Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem and the Palestinian lands this year had a different taste since they took place under Arab sovereignty. Saleh Qallab said that for the first time since 1967 the Arab population — Muslims and Christians alike — celebrated Christmas with genuine joy because for the first time in decades they

see the Palestinian flag rise high and without any fear on Arab territory. For the first time in 28 years, added the writer, the Palestinians are experiencing the taste of freedom without which life is meaningless.

Tareq Masarweh urged all Palestinian opposition groups and factions to take part in the coming legislative elections scheduled for Jan. 20. The columnist in Al Ra'i daily said that boycotting the elections does not favour these groups' position, adding that on the contrary the elections offer everyone a precious opportunity to voice his or her views regarding the shape of government they want. By boycotting the elections, the opposition would remain alienated from the public and their views would remain in the dark. He said taking part in the elections is a contribution to serving the interests of the Palestinian people and an exercise of democracy free of Israeli domination.

Ali Safadi, a writer in Al Dustour, hailed a move by wealthy Palestinians living abroad to purchase the Israeli settlements that have been built close to or within the perimeters of the Arab towns and villages in Palestine. Describing this move as a demonstration of true patriotism, the writer said that buying these settlements means helping to erase Jewish presence from the midst of the Arab areas in Palestine and is considered as a strong support for the authorities in their on-going negotiations with the Israelis over a lasting settlement.

Commenting on a seminar held recently at the University of Jordan to discuss the work of the media in Jordan, a writer in Al Ra'i daily said that it is regrettable to see the Jordan Press Association failing to handle its role and leaving the door open to government's attempts to impose a stricter press and publications law on the press. Oraib Rintawi said that the journalists who have pledged before His Majesty the King to deal with any excesses and violations and contain problems that plagued relations between the government and the media in the past have failed to date to find the proper mechanism to deal with this issue. The writer said that the problems involving the press that surfaced recently do not justify the enactment of new legislation that would further limit the freedom of the press. She said that the question of controlling excesses and violations on the part of journalists should be left totally to the press association to handle.

Lauding the efforts of the Jordanian Consumers Protection Society for its role in rallying the public against coffee merchants, Mohammad Kawash said that the public is showing real response to such move in order to help bring down the excessive coffee prices. The columnist, who writes for Al Dustour, said the public looks with hope to this society to lead the campaign against other merchants who monopolise basic commodities and help bring their prices down.

A writer in Al Ra'i called on the public Security Department to control what he called irresponsible practice on the part of certain rent-a-car offices which allow reckless youths to rent cars and endanger the lives of people by irresponsible driving. Samir Hiyari said that for an exchange of a few dinars, the car rental offices are allowing youth people to rent cars and drive recklessly close to girls schools, universities and in side streets. Citing a number of horrible accidents, the writer said this irresponsible action should be checked.

The central dilemma of the welfare states: How to scale back

By Robert J. Samuelson

WASHINGTON — There is so much scripted melodrama in the Washington budget struggle that the larger issues get lost. But anyone who doubts that there are larger issues should reflect upon what has been happening in France, where angry unions shut down basic public services in response to the government's efforts to cut its budget deficit.

Paris and Washington are grappling with the central dilemma of the modern welfare state: how to scale back popular benefits that no longer can be afforded.

The difference with Paris is that in Washington the resistance to change is led by the president. Bill Clinton plays the role that the unions play in France. He has sought to make changes harder, perhaps impossible, by denouncing those who propose them as cruel. He provoked both government "shutdowns" to dramatize his case. The shutdowns have been political props to cast the Republicans as irresponsible.

But the message from Paris is that if changes are delayed for too long, they ultimately trigger social turmoil. And change is inevitable, because the welfare state — a term that Americans dislike but that describes U.S. social spending almost as much as Europe's — is overextended.

It aimed to make capitalism more compassionate. Governments everywhere created benefits for the old, the unemployed and the poor. Rules were devised to raise wages and improve job security and working conditions.

To say that all these benefits can no longer be afforded means that they have hit two limits. The first is political. Although benefits are popular voters will not support them with higher taxes.

Almost all industrial countries run budget deficits. In many countries, tax burdens have reached the point of diminishing returns. That is, higher taxes cause more tax evasion. The wealthy shift funds to tax havens. The less wealthy resort to the "underground economy" (informal transactions that are not taxed).

Economics imposes the second limit. At some point, big government — through punitive taxes, wasteful spending and rigid regulation — undermines economic growth and job creation.

America may not have reached this point, but most European countries have. In 1995, U.S. government spending totals 34 per cent of gross domestic product. By contrast, it is 50 per cent in Germany, 54 per cent in France.

Pressures on the welfare state will intensify everywhere for the same reason: aging populations. In most countries, the lion's share of social spending goes to the elderly. Longer life spans, post-war baby booms and modern medicine combine to create a growing economic burden.

As projected by the OECD, the number of potential workers per retiree in the United States is 4.7 in 1995 and will be 3.3 in 2005. For France the corresponding numbers are 2.8 and 1.7. For Japan, 2.8 and 2.1. For Germany, 3.1

and 2.3. For Italy, 2.4 and 1.8.

Unless they are modified, existing social security and health insurance programmes will push up spending, taxes or deficits dramatically. All countries will consider lowering benefits, raising retirement ages or both.

The welfare state's ultimate horror is a suicidal spiral. The economy sputters, making it harder for governments to pay benefits, but efforts to revive the economy by curbing benefits founder on popular resistance. Europe is already caught in this spiral.

In 1973, France's unemployment rate was less than 3 per cent; now it is 11.5 per cent. For the entire European Union, unemployment averages almost 11 per cent. The welfare state did not cause all this extra joblessness, but it caused a lot.

Still, it is hard to change, as France's strikes attest.

In fact, the proposed changes are not that harsh. Family allowances (payments for children) would be frozen for a year and then be subject to taxes. Open-ended reimbursement for health costs, which leads to the overuse of drugs and of doctors, would be checked by spending limits. A modest income tax surcharge (0.5 per cent of income) would be imposed to retire the social security system's debt. But the system's main features would remain.

It is equally true that Congress's budget changes would not destroy America's welfare state. Some programmes for the poor (Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medicaid) would be largely shifted to states through block grants. The growth of Medicare for the elderly would be slowed slightly. There is room to argue about these changes. They may weaken the social safety net, but it is inaccurate to say that they discard it.

To vilify Republicans, Mr. Clinton has said precisely that. Nor has he yet bargained in good faith, as he repeatedly said he would, to reach a balanced budget. In mid-November, he and congressional leaders agreed to reach a balance in seven years using economic assumptions of the Congressional Budget Office. Despite his pledge, Mr. Clinton has not said how he would do that. His latest plan fell \$70 billion to \$90 billion short of balance in 2002.

As in France, the politics pit present against future voters. Mr. Clinton has positioned himself as the protector of the present. The real question is not whether the welfare state survives. It will. Hardly anyone wants to revert to unfettered capitalism. The real question is whether it can gradually rein in its overcommitments — or whether it will do so convulsively as the result of crisis.

The case for anticipating crisis is never easy. Everyone can see who loses by planned change; no one can see precisely who wins by avoided crisis. But doing nothing won't work. The sooner Americans start, the easier it will be. The United States is not yet in Europe's fix, but it waits long enough it could be.

The Washington Post.

Four die in Israeli raid

(Continued from page 1)

area since 1985 to curb guerrilla raids. Part of it overlaps the sector policed by the 5,200-strong U.N. interim force in Lebanon.

President Elias Hrawi indicated Friday that the government would deploy Lebanon's 50,000-man army to stop guerrilla attacks if the Israelis withdraw under a peace agreement.

"Our independence will not be complete without the liberation" of the region, he told reporters in Beirut.

President Hrawi said only Lebanese troops would deploy along the border with Israel.

"Rest assured, there will only be the Lebanese army in the southern part of the country once peace is established," Mr. Hrawi told reporters.

"It is in no way a sign of ingratitude for the aid offered by our sister Syria during the difficult times it has passed," said the president.

"But this great responsibility will be that of the Lebanese army, which is currently preparing to assume this role," he said.

Israel has proposed in the run-up to renewed peace talks with Syria this week in the United States that Damascus maintain its sizeable influence over Lebanon's internal affairs to maintain stability on the Lebanese side of the border with Israel.

Syria already has 40,000 troops stationed in Lebanon, and Israel has established a self-declared "security zone" in southern Lebanon to protect its northern border.



AWAITING AN END TO THE SUFFERING: An Afghan family escapes the fighting in Kabul (AFP photo)

After years of war, some Afghans seek a royal solution

By Ian Stewart
The Associated Press

KHYBER PASS, Pakistan — All the king's men can't put Afghanistan back together again. Or can they?

It might seem far-fetched: An octogenarian monarch, exiled from his country for 22 years, returning to end a bitter civil war among Islamic groups.

For a small, but growing band of followers, though, King Zahir Shah's often promised return to Afghanistan isn't absurd, it's their country's only hope.

Afghanistan is in desperate straits. Once a cold war front line, it was occupied by a Soviet army that battled Afghan guerrillas through the 1980s in an effort to prop up a weak communist regime.

The insurgency that forced the Soviet to pull out and then ousted the Marxist regime in April 1992 left the country in ruins. It also

spawned a war among rival guerrilla groups that still rages — 16 years after the first Soviet soldiers marched into Afghanistan on Dec. 24, 1979.

The years of hardship and bloodshed have at least some Afghans longing for the political stability and relative prosperity of the King's 40-year reign.

"The King, Zahir Shah, is a symbol. He is from a time when Afghanistan was strong. The people will remember that," said Shahzada Khan, a royalist interviewed in Pakistan's frontier region, where hundreds of thousands of Afghans have sought refuge.

But Afghanistan is a different place. Power no longer flows from a constitutionally based monarchy but from the guns supporting factional leaders who do not want to cede power to anyone, let alone an 81-year-old king forced to flee two decades ago.

The king antagonized many conservative Muslims

during his reign by expanding women's rights and opportunities and by arresting ultraconservative Islamic leaders he viewed as a threat to modernisation and political stability.

How then would the king and his men persuade the warring factions to lay down their arms — a feat that has eluded the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and dozens of countries and negotiators?

With charisma, his supporters say.

During his rule, the king reined in Afghanistan's rancorous tribes and prevailed over 40 years of peace — a rare stretch of tranquility for a nation prone to blood feuds, foreign invasions and coups.

"The king kept this wild country under control for all his years," said Farooq Haqbeen, a monarchist living in Pakistan. "The people remember. They will listen to him. He can stop this killing."

The king's success came from his ability to win popular support from the public in all parts of the country, said Ishaq Gailani, a confidante and relative of the royal family.

"All the peace-loving people are scattered and separated by war. The king is the man who can bring them together. He can do this," Mr. Gailani said.

Indeed, the king seems to be popular with many of the more than 1.6 million Afghans refugees living in Pakistan near the border with their battered country.

"If Zahir Shah is the head of a temporary government, he can hold legitimate elections," said Abdul Rashid, a refugee from Kabul. "He will provide a strong and stable government, not a puppet regime."

Even the United Nations has given some thought to a role for the king. U.N. envoy Mahmood Mestiri met with the king's aides at the monarch's home in exile in

Rome early in 1995. And in July, the king's son-in-law, Abdul Wali, travelled to Pakistan where he met with U.N. officials.

"We would never rule out something that could bring an end to the fighting in Afghanistan," said Mr. Mestiri's senior aide, Abu Nafiz.

But there are problems, the royalists concede. "There are enemies," Mr. Haqbeen said.

In early December, unidentified gunmen killed two of the king's relatives who were working at an Afghan refugee camp in northwestern Pakistan.

Several weeks earlier, after a flurry of news coverage on the king's possible return, two royalists living in Pakistan were slain.

In all, more than 600 Afghan royalists have been killed in Pakistan since the king was forced out of power by leftists in 1973.

Afghanistan's nominal president, Burhanuddin

Rabbani, a religious scholar thought to have close ties to Russia and Iran, doesn't want the king back. He says it would only complicate an already impossible situation.

Leaders of the Taliban militia — which was formed by religious students and is perhaps the strongest of Afghanistan's 11 factions — are adamant in opposing the king regaining the throne.

"Zahir Shah will have no place in our Afghanistan," said Noor Mohammad Saqib, a senior Taliban religious leader.

Holding up a hand to stop the translator, Mr. Saqib leaned forward on his knees and in carefully pronounced English called the king "infidel."

"If he returns to Afghanistan there will be fighting and disturbances that will go beyond anything we have seen," Mr. Saqib said. "His return is out of the question."

Letter from Tehran

'This is a free country'

By Karen Dabrowska

ALI FINISHES every sentence with "What do you think? This is a free country!" He talks with a confident pride about the achievements of Iran's revolution. "Of course there were mistakes in the beginning. But we learned from them. We learned how to deal with the East and the West from the eight-year war with Iraq. Iran will never take part in another war. We have learned how to be self-sufficient, how to produce our own cars. We don't have to rely on anyone, we can develop our own industry." Ali insists that Iran is a "modern" country. A walk down any of Tehran's streets seems to support his view. New high-rise buildings have replaced the more traditional architecture. Numerous construction projects are in evidence and there is no sign of the damage from the "war of the cities" when the Iraqis attacked Tehran with Russian and Korean Scud missiles.

America may be insisting on sanctions against Iran. But the Iranians don't really care. They carry on with life and make the best of their misfortunes. Apart from the elegantly tiled "Down with America" mosaic on the wall of the coffee shop, the Intercontinental Hotel does its Western tradition proud.

There is no shortage of computers, fax machines, elegant Western-style clothes and Western luxuries as perfumes and make-up. The Iranians are building a bridge between East and West, trying to take the best of what both worlds have to offer, while insisting on the uniquely Islamic flavour of their society. They love their carpets, handicrafts, jewellery, miniature paintings and silverware. And they love their mobile phones, Mercedes cars, satellite TV (illegal but tolerated) and Pizza Express.

"We have our own traditions," Ali insists. "Farsi Cola has replaced Coca Cola. We respect our Islamic heritage. Women wear

the hijab as a sign of respect. But they don't have to. They also wear makeup. They show their hair. 'This is too much.' Ali quips as he sees a woman wearing a chador. "And this is not enough," he complains at the sight of a loosely buttoned jacket and a multi-coloured scarf.

All studied in the West. He was in London at the time of the revolution and came back during university holidays to take part in the anti-American demonstrations. Today he combines a morning job as a business consultant with an afternoon job in an import-export company. His traditionally furnished home in north Tehran is much too big for his wife and two small children. He is proud his wife doesn't have to work. He is proud his children play computer games and study calligraphy. And he makes sure he prays five times a day.

Mohammad flicks his tie defiantly. "I don't work for anyone, I am not with anyone and no one tells me

how to dress. He rejects the Islamic dress code and uses his suit and tie, which the authorities regard as an undesirable Western trend, as a symbol of defiance. For him things were good under the shah. The revolution has taken the country into the past. It is behind the West "by at least 50 years" when it should by now be an industrial power rivaling Japan.

Like a good economist, he compares conditions in Iran in 1975, four years before the revolution, with those in 1995. In 1975 there were 30 million people in Iran, today there are 60 million. Oil exports were 6.5m barrels per day compared with 2.8m bpd, then the price was \$25 per barrel compared with \$15 now. The shah's government had foreign exchange reserves of \$30bn whereas the revolutionary government is \$30bn in debt. Iran, once the fifth largest conventional military power in the world, is now having to rebuild its army after an eight-year war with Iraq

and the salaries of civil servants have plunged from \$700 a month to \$100.

Mohammad has little time for "government by mullahs." He is angry the ministry of religious guidance would not accept him as an MP. He is adamant he is not a Muslim and he only read the Quran so that he could argue against it. After serving coffee, with brandy, in his impeccably furnished public relations office where the women are not obliged to wear the hijab, he finishes his introduction to Iran with the story of the medieval Italian mystic Girolamo Savonarola. After ridding the Dominican order of scandalous corruption, Savonarola became a political reformer and supervised the formation of a government in which the people were to fear God, amend their conduct and prefer public to private interests. But Savonarola came unstocked when his order did not allow him to bear the crucifix through the flames during a trial by fire which was supposed to

test his Christian credentials. The citizens of Florence were infuriated, called Savonarola an impostor and, after an unfair heresy trial, condemned him to death and hanged him. Mohammad compares Savonarola to Imam Khomeini. "The problem with the Iranians was they didn't get rid of Khomeini and his puritanical Islamic government has strengthened its hold on the country."

Both Mohammad and Ali love Iran and are determined to make visitors feel welcome. One insists that the government and the people are one, while the other insists that a distinction must be made between the Iranian people and their government. But they both agree that Iran has to be judged on the facts and not on the black propaganda which portrays it as a horrendous fanatical state dragged into the seventh century by a conservative religious elite.

Middle East International

Syria, Israel end talks on positive note

(Continued from page 1)

Golan for historic reasons but because the plateau is a strategic stake. The time has come to use it as a trade to obtain a true peace which guarantees Israel's security," he added.

All prior peace talks between the two nations have stumbled over Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights, a strategic plateau that Israel seized from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war.

This round of discussions

follows a six-month break, after an impasse over the question of an eventual Israeli withdrawal from the plateau.

An Israeli spokesman, Jidi Baltansky, said the talks were expected to conclude as scheduled after lunch Friday.

A week-long break will follow before negotiations resume in early January, after which Secretary of State Warren Christopher is to make a return trip to the

Middle East with stops in Jerusalem and Damascus.

The assassination last month of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish extremist opposed to peace with Arabs appears to have created a new climate of compromise.

Mr. Rabin's successor, Shimon Peres, has taken a different approach grounded in the notion that rather than security providing peace, peace will ensure security.

"I would rather have 100,000 tourists than 10,000

troops" determining Israel's relations with Syria, Mr. Peres said recently.

Aides say Mr. Peres is prepared to give up ground-based early warning stations in the Golan Heights, a demand that stymied previous peace talks.

Israel is also reportedly studying, with the United States, a range of alternatives, such as observation balloons on the border or U.S. spy planes.

Mr. Baltansky said a joint statement after this round of

talks was unlikely, although State Department officials refused to rule out the possibility of a U.S. statement.

The English-language Jerusalem Post meanwhile reported Thursday that Israel was seeking up to \$12 billion in U.S. financial aid if it agrees to give up the Golan.

Citing Israeli sources, the newspaper said Israel wanted \$7 billion to cover new security arrangements, including weaponry and ground-based and aerial surveillance equipment, to prevent a surprise Syrian attack from the Golan.

An additional \$2 billion is

reportedly being sought to compensate the 13,000 Israeli settlers who would have to be resettled after an Israeli withdrawal and the other \$3 billion would help pay for water projects in the area, it said.

Israel receives nearly a sixth of its annual consumption of drinking water from sources on the Golan Heights.

Coinciding with the resumption of the Israeli-Syrian talks, several thousand settlers held an emergency meeting in the Golan city of Katzrin to protest the government's presumed plans to abandon the territory.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3630/40	Canadian dollar	1.4324/34
	1.6032/42	Deutsche marks	1.508/18
	29.43/47	Dutch guilders	4.8976/26
	1584.4/5.9	Swiss francs	103.20/30
	6.6260/60	Belgian francs	6.3220/70
	1.4135/45	French francs	1.4135/45
	0.7435/40	Italian lire	1.4135/45
	7.7317/27	Japanese yen	1.4135/45
One sterling	\$1.5490/00	Swedish crowns	1.4135/45
Gold (ounce)	\$386.65/387.15	Norwegian crowns	1.4135/45
		Danish crowns	1.4135/45
		Singapore dollars	1.4135/45
		Australian dollars	1.4135/45
		Hong Kong dollars	1.4135/45

Share prices rise at AFM

By Khattab Salman
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prices at the Jordan stock exchange rose during the past five days of trading boosted by gains made in the last two days. The Amman Financial Market (AFM) index closed at 158.5, 1.3 points higher than last week's closing. Brokers at AFM said that trading in the last two days totalled JD 4 million (\$5.7 million), while the average trading in the first three days was JD 0.6 million (\$0.87 million). AFM weekly report said

that the volume of trading this week reached JD 5.8 million (\$8.3 million), which represented a JD 3.5 million (\$5 million) drop than last week's turnover. "The impact of the new investment law enacted last week by the government is not clear yet," one broker said. "Maybe it's too early to examine the effect of the new law on the stock market," he added, "but we should notice some positive results in 1996."

The new law eliminates previous curbs on foreign investors' buying on the Jordanian market. The government passed the law to attract investment.

Foreign investments, mostly of Arab ownership, account for 32 per cent of the \$4.4 billion capital on the Jordanian exchange, which has the second-highest trading volume in the Middle East after Kuwait.

According to the report, 43 companies gained in this week, 17 fell, and 12 remained unchanged. Over two million shares changed hands during the week through 3,072 contracts.

The industry sector led the gains on the market with a turnover of JD 2.95 million (\$4.2 million) followed by banks and financial institutions accounting for JD 1.4 million (\$2 million).

The industrial index gained 3.81 points (3.04 per cent), while the banks index lost 0.68 points (0.36 per cent).

Service companies index was the only other index to gain, up 1.46 points (1.15 per cent) with JD 0.84 million in trading volume (\$1.2 million).

The insurance index fell by 0.03 points (0.02 per cent) according for JD 0.13 million (\$0.185 million) of this week's trading volume.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607172
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (23/12/1995 - 27/12/1995)
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLC	308,560	236.000	236.000	236.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	265,526	4.580	4.580	4.580
CALING AMMAN BANK	2,750	4.450	4.450	4.500
BANK OF JORDAN	20,882	3.700	3.700	3.750
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	27,975	1.200	1.200	1.240
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	35,586	2.520	2.520	2.530
THE HOUSING BANK	63,518	3.020	3.020	3.030
JORDAN TRUST BANK	49,321	2.800	2.800	2.830
JORDAN CREDIT BANK	64,030	1.120	1.120	1.120
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	33,471	3.610	3.610	3.510
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	31,607	3.290	3.290	3.150
BUSINESS BANK	8,205	3.230	3.230	3.230
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	79,298	3.550	3.550	3.450
BANK ALTAHAWA INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1,793	3.300	3.300	3.260
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	143,479	0.930	0.930	0.930
ARAB BANKING CORPORATION/JORDAN	4,515	5.250	5.250	5.340
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	79,489	1.520	1.520	1.540

BANKS SECTOR	1410122	INDEX NUMBER	157.93
CHANGE	-10.824		
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	6,068	2.840	2.800
ARAB LIFE & ACCIDENT INSURANCE	23,740	2.280	2.400
AL-WIL AL-ARABY INSURANCE	3,945	4.610	4.450

INSURANCE SECTOR	33371	INDEX NUMBER	131.49
CHANGE	-10.824		
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	244,593	1.710	1.750
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	7,528	8.750	8.750
JOINT DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	10,519	5.370	1.250
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	47,448	5.900	5.900
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	13,014	2.600	2.570
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	26,105	1.800	1.810
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	51,846	0.960	1.010
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	11,673	1.090	1.200
HOUSING BANK, REFINANCING & MORTGAGES	3,465	0.670	0.700
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONSUMER HOTELS	12,760	2.100	2.180
ARAB ENTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	14,386	3.230	3.260
JORDANIAN REFINANCING INVESTMENT HOLDING	46,795	1.140	1.150
KARMA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	17,148	1.170	1.180
UNITED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	130,050	2.230	2.280
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	180,819	1.020	1.110

SERVICES SECTOR	837947	INDEX NUMBER	128.79
CHANGE	+11.154		
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	756	21.000	21.000
ADVANCED CONSUM. MATERIALS MANUFACTURING	1,860	1.800	2.000
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	1,060,018	3.620	3.700
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	214,212	3.200	3.490
THE ARAB POTASH	210,484	5.250	5.300
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	217,223	10.080	10.250
JORDAN SAMBING	357	7.000	7.000
THE JORDANIAN COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	11,463	5.150	5.300
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS	51,438	8.000	8.000

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	105,420	4.470	4.470	4.490
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	38,842	6.000	6.000	6.050
THE JORDAN PAPER MANUFACTURING	2,300	2.300	2.300	2.300
JORDAN PAPER & CARDBOARD FACTORIES	420	3.860	3.860	3.900
ARAB CHEMICAL DETERGENT INDUSTRIES	15,053	11.920	12.920	12.000
SPINNING & WEAVING	16,184	1.650	1.650	1.800
ARAB INDUSTRIES	3,432	2.190	2.190	2.230
AR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	84,422	7.700	7.700	7.900
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	56,428	3.300	3.300	3.500
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	45,947	0.600	0.600	0.600
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	52,931	1.430	1.430	1.430
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	15,002	1.800	1.800	1.700
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	72,501	1.020	1.020	1.040
INTERNATIONAL PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	18,407	1.700	1.700	1.700
JORDAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	770	4.750	4.750	4.950
ALADIT INDUSTRIES	7,365	1.030	1.030	1.080
JORDAN ROPEWORK INDUSTRIES	16,763	3.300	3.300	3.550
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	12,364	4.500	4.500	4.700
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	147,576	3.800	3.800	3.850
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	7,726	1.250	1.250	1.340
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	28,762	1.730	1.730	1.850
KAWTEX INVESTMENT	1,668	1.620	1.620	1.600
UNIVERSAL HOUSING INDUSTRIES	29,955	3.180	3.180	3.150
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	112,844	1.940	1.940	2.000
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	51,620	1.480	1.480	1.480
EL-ZAY READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	76,446	2.090	2.090	2.250
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	109,488	1.400	1.400	1.400
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRIES	40,170	1.590	1.590	1.620

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	2545283	INDEX NUMBER: 128.99
CHANGE	+3.047	
GRAND TOTAL	5235910	INDEX NUMBER: 150.95
CHANGE	-10.824	

PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (23/12/1995 - 27/12/1995)
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	45,866	0.710	0.710	0.750
JORDAN TRADE FACILITIES	44,872	0.740	0.740	0.740
ARAB FIB. CO.	76,534	1.020	1.020	1.090
UNION INVESTMENT COMP. 501	28,258	0.890	0.890	0.870
ARAB FOOD & MEDICAL APPLIANCES	3,923	0.810	0.810	0.800
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	9,787	0.690	0.690	0.700
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MINING/INDCO	6,321	0.490	0.490	0.460
NATIONAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES CO. LTD	12,705	1.630	1.630	1.650
NATIONAL TEXTILE & PLASTICS IND. CO	31,858	0.910	0.910	0.900
SAVATEX DYES & NOODLES	963	0.790	0.790	0.770
UNIVERSAL RETAIL	115	1.150	1.150	1.150
KID PHARM.	1,946	0.770	0.770	0.780
ARAB ELECTRIC INDUSTRIES	41,583	0.890	0.890	0.860
UNION TOBACCO	44,079	1.230	1.230	1.240
ARAB PHARMACEUTICALS	3,095	0.800	0.800	0.800
INDUSTRIES ENGINEERING	3,369	0.790	0.790	0.790
INDUSTRIAL CERAMIC	55,350	1.370	1.370	1.350
PEARL SANITARY PAPER CONVERTING	3,904	0.860	0.860	0.900
NATIONAL POLYESTER 501	975	0.850	0.850	0.850
NATIONAL POLYESTER INC. (IND. / MANUFACT.)	86,737	1.010	1.010	0.980

GRAND TOTAL	524072	INDEX NUMBER	128.99
CHANGE	+3.047		

BUSINESS

A review of news from the Arabic press

Local cement sales hit record

★ CEMENT SALES to the local market reached 2,560,358 tonnes from the beginning of this year until Dec. 12, 1995. The amount is the highest since the company was established and confirms that building activity is on the rise. The figure is expected to reach 2,650,000 tonnes by the end of this month, an increase of between six to seven per cent over the 1994 sales. If 800,000 tonnes of exports are to be included, total 1995 sales may reach 3.5 million tonnes. Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore imported Jordanian cement this year, in addition to Syria which purchased 100,000 tonnes under an agreement between the two countries. A source at the company expected production capacity to rise to four million tonnes at the end of 1996 as a result of exports to the Palestinian self-rule areas. A Palestinian company has signed an agreement with the cement company to import 100,000 tonnes to the self-rule areas (Al Dustour).

Committee studying enlargement of investments in Aqaba

★ THE COUNCIL OF Ministers has decided to form a committee headed by the minister of finance to study the possibility of widening the investment scope of local and foreign investors in Aqaba within the framework of consolidating the investment climate in Jordan. In addition to the minister of finance, the committee includes the ministers of industry and trade, transport, tourism, water and planning. The committee will lay down the appropriate bases to lease government lands in Aqaba to local and foreign firms for tourism investments, similar to those made for the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. The committee is expected to present its recommendations to the Cabinet in the coming few days in order to take the appropriate decisions in this regard (Al Aswaq).

Dutch company completes study to modernise Queen Alia International Airport

★ A SEMI-GOVERNMENT Dutch company has completed a feasibility study to upgrade and modernise Queen Alia International Airport. The study, which was given a special importance, was presented to the Jordanian government and an announcement is expected soon on starting the project. According to the director-general of the Civil Aviation Authority, the Dutch government has conducted the study free of charge and offered to carry out the project with 40 per cent of the cost to be covered by a grant from the Dutch government and the rest in the form of loan. The total cost is expected to be around JD 30 million, but the Jordanian government has not yet decided on the project which might take four or five years to carry out. As for Aqaba-Eilat airport project, the director general pointed out that the feasibility study for the project has started and is expected to be completed by mid-April of next year. The study is being carried out by the U.S. company Lockheed Martin at a cost of \$500,000 (Al Dustour).

Cooperative Organisation to continue operations under different name, functions

★ THE COOPERATIVE Organisation will continue to operate under a new name and functions, the head of the institution said denying rumours that it is to be liquidated and its loans endorsed to other government institutions. According to government directives, the director-general said, there will be a change of name, a reduction in the number of jobs and operations and confining of its management to the government, after cancelling the private sector participation in the board of directors. The organisation's head blamed the duplication of responsibilities and management between the private and public sectors for the financial troubles that hit the institution and brought it down to the present condition (Al Dustour).

JORDAN MARKETPLACE

DAJANI JEWELLERS

Gems of the world . All birthstones in 18 & 21 K gold . Unique designs .

Amra Hotel Shops
6th circle, Amman .

Furnished Apartment For Rent
In Um Uthaina. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, ground floor, telephone. Other apartments and villas. Furnished/unfurnished for rent or sale.
Abdoun Real Estate
Tel: 610605, 610609, 610520

STUDIO HAIG
Professional Quality in 1 Hour Service
Develop your colour film at our shop and get:
• **JUMBO photo size 30% larger**
• **Free enlargement 20 x 30 cm**
Shmeisani - Opp. Grindlays Bank Phone: 604042
Swedish Tel: 823891

A SECURE Hotel Swefiyeh
Flat O.Tel SECURITY HOSPITALITY GASTRONOMY
All Suites Hotel FLAT O.Tel
الوكة الفندقية المكنية
المواكبة بمستوى عالمي جديد
863944 - 816690

Cheers Cafe
Hamburgers + Pizzas
ELITE CAFE Swefiyeh
816690
At Torino

SANABEL REAL ESTATE
FOR RENT
Deluxe Villas & Apartments in Amman
for further details please call
Tel. 864230
Fax. 864231

Crystal
Quality Furnished Suites
One and Two Bedrooms
Reasonable Rates For Short or Long Stay
5th Circle - 692672

EURO DOLLAR RENT A CAR
Make Car Rental Simple
Shmeisani
Tel: 693399

SZEENWAN GARDENS CHINESE RESTAURANT
Typical Chinese Food
Stuffed Chinese Chicks
Open 11:30 - 3:00 & 6:00 - Midnight
Take away is available
Opp. Al-Nabab Street
Um Uthaina Commercial Centre
Tel: 861174
Recs Tested. Always Loved

Teppanyaki Sashimi Sushi
For Res. 812997 - 814118
Kneza St. Doucet Center

NEW YEAR in CAIRO
Ask about our Special Christmas Parties at Jerusalem & Jerusalem
Jerusalem Express Travel
Amman (Abdali) 685195
(Newtown) 622151 Zarqa 8225184
Irbid 277687 Ajlun 314981

Have Your's Nightly Lunch & Dinner
SHMEISANI TEL 680093

MAURICE AKKAWI & SONS
Francesco emalto Men's Wear
Louis Feraud Ladies Wear
Amra Hotel Commercial Center
Tel. 864721

Let's Share and Enjoy
THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT together at
JUDE CENTER
★ GIFTS
★ HOME ACCESSORIES
★ FURNITURE
Swefiyeh - Behind Cairo Bank

Polivier
French Cuisine
Abdoun - Tel: 819564
Mobil Phone: (079) 29339

NOUROZ
European Steaks & Chicken
Middle Eastern Grills
Pizza & Snacks
Hamburgers
Mozza, Salads
Argilla
Tel: 642830
Jabal Amman, 3rd Circle

AVIS RENT A CAR
We try harder.
Main office
King Abdullah Gardens
Tel. 699420

CROWN HOTEL
INDOOR HEATED SWIMMING POOL
SAUNA & JACUZZI
FITNESS ROOM
SQUASH COURT
TEL 758180
SALES OFFICE 605943 - 605157
RADIO & TV STATION RD.

ASSARAYA Rent a car
Head Office
Tel. 06-684771 / Fax 684973
Aqaba Office
Tel. 03-316265 / Fax 316265
Emergency Call 24 Hours
078 / 21526
Swissair King Abdullah Gardens

Financial Markets
In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Currency	New York Close 27/12/95	Tokyo Close 28/12/95
Starting Pound	1.5800	1.5850**
Deutsche Mark	1.4335	1.4363
Swiss Franc	1.1570	1.1526**
French Franc	4.6975	4.6947**
Japanese Yen	105.83	107.64
European Currency Unit	1.3765	1.3825**

* two per cent discount on opening & bid limit only

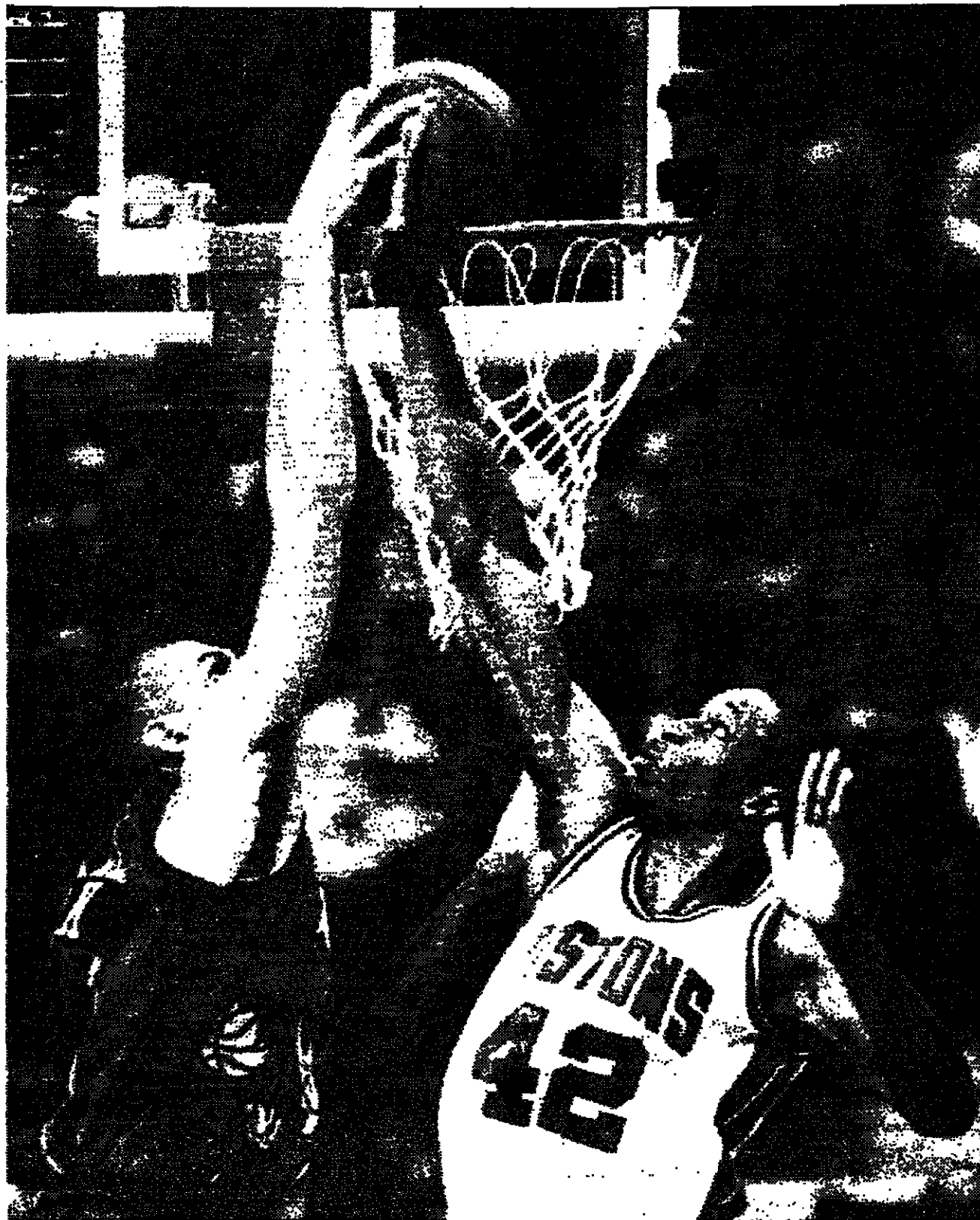
Eurocurrency Interest Rates Date: 26/12/1995

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH	12 MTH
U.S. Dollar	5.37	5.37	5.28	5.16
Sterling Pound	6.26	6.30	6.18	6.11
Deutsche Mark	8.50	8.50	8.43	8.37
Swiss Franc	1.67	1.62	1.56	1.50
French Franc	4.67	4.66	4.68	4.62
European Currency Unit	5.16	5.12	5.06	5.00

Interbank bid rates for various currencies U.S. Dollars 1 million or equivalent

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 26/12/1995

U.S. Dollar	3.2612	3.2106
Sterling Pound	1.1077	1.1277
Deutsche Mark	0.4945	0.4970
Swiss Franc	0.4138	0.4167
French Franc	0.1450	0.1453
Japanese Yen*	3.4597	0.4931
Dutch Guilder	0.4418	0.4461
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000
Italian Lira*	0.3448	0.3450
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000



Toronto Raptors' Zan Tabak (left) slams for two points over Detroit Pistons' Theo Ratliff December 28 during first half

Ewing's early exit costs Knicks

NEW YORK (AFP) — The surging Cleveland Cavaliers beat the New York Knicks 86-76 here Thursday, a rare home loss for the Knicks who also saw star centre Patrick Ewing limp off with a sprained ankle.

Cleveland have now won 14 of their last 19 National Basketball Association games as their turnaround from an 0-7 start continues.

New York lost for just the fourth time in 13 games, and were held to their lowest points total of the season.

The Cavaliers scored the first eight points of the game and never trailed. Michael Cage started the game with a layup before Bobby Phillips and Chris Mills made consecutive three-pointers to give Cleveland an 8-0 lead.

Ewing left the court midway through the first quarter after hurting his right ankle

putting up a shot. X-rays showed no fracture, and he was listed as day-to-day.

"It made it a lot easier without Patrick because he didn't clog up the middle," said Phillips. "Our small lineup did a great job. We took advantage of the opportunity. We are approaching every game at a high confidence level where we think we can beat anybody."

Hubert Davis scored 20 points for the Knicks, who drew within 70-66 after Davis made a three-pointer. Cleve-

land put the game out of reach with a 14-5 burst. Going into the game, Ewing was averaging 21.7 points and 9.8 rebounds. On Saturday he shot 15-of-19 from the floor for his 29th career 40-point performance as the Knicks beat Toronto 103-91.

"We caught a big break when Patrick went down," said Cavaliers coach Mike Fratello. "If you ask anyone would they rather play New York with Patrick Ewing or without, of course, it would be without."

The Cavaliers connected

on just 41 per cent of their shots from the floor, but outscored New York 21-9 from the foul line. The Cavs missed just one of 22 free throws.

Terrill Brandon made all 10 of his free throws and to stretch his streak to 51 straight foul shots over his last eight games.

It was the ninth time this season that Cleveland had held an opponent to 85 points or less.

"We certainly had a tough time scoring enough points to stay competitive, but we did get back to within four and I thought we were going to have a chance to win the game," Knicks coach Don Nelson said. "They hit a couple of shots to pull back away, which happens when you're trying to give as much extra effort as you can in a catch-up game."

Manchester United scored such a convincing 2-0 victory over Newcastle Wednesday that the bookmakers made major changes in the odds and both managers were convinced it would be a much closer race.

"Everybody has been talking about Newcastle going 13 points clear, but now it's only seven and that makes a

real difference," Reds' manager Alex Ferguson said. "I think it's wide open again now."

After its victory over Newcastle, Manchester United returns to its Old Trafford stadium Saturday to take on struggler Queens Park Rangers in the hope of further cutting the magpies lead from seven points to four.

Eric Cantona, Andy Cole, Roy Keane and Ryan Giggs had standout games for the Reds against Newcastle and another performance like that could leave the Rangers defence in tatters.

He came into his own this season with seven games of

300 passing yards and a total of 38 touchdowns — the third-highest single-season total in NFL history.

His most frequent target has been Robert Brooks, who had a club record 1,497 receiving yards.

Favre also benefited from an improvement in the Packers' running game as Edgar Bennett became the team's first 1,000-yard rusher since 1978.

The Falcons, who play in Atlanta's Georgia Dome, may have some trouble adjusting to Green Bay's arctic weather.

But they will be buoyed by their 28-27 upset of Super Bowl champions San Francisco in the final game of the regular season.

Quarterback Jeff George suffered a sprained neck in the first half of that game, but says he'll be ready to play in Green Bay, where the Packers have won 17 of their last 18 games.

Playoff matchups and schedule

AFC qualifiers

Kansas City (conference championship, Western Division, first-round bye, home-

field advantage throughout AFC-playoffs), Pittsburgh (Central Division, first-round bye), Buffalo (Eastern Division), Indianapolis (wild card), Miami (wild card), San Diego (wild card).

NFC qualifiers

Dallas (conference championship, Eastern Division, first-round bye, homefield advantage throughout NFC playoffs), San Francisco (Western Division, first-round bye), Green Bay (Central Division), Philadelphia (wild card), Detroit (wild card), Atlanta (wild card).

Schedule: Wild card round Saturday, December 30

Miami (9-7) at Buffalo (10-6)

Detroit (10-6) at Philadelphia (10-6)

Sunday, December 31

Atlanta (9-7) at Green Bay (11-5)

Indianapolis (9-7) at San Diego (9-7)

Divisional Playoffs Saturday, January 6

Sunday, January 7

Conference championships Sunday, January 14

Super Bowl 30 (at Phoenix) Sunday, January 28

NFL playoffs roundup

Four-time Super Bowl losers Buffalo back for another AFC bid

BUFFALO (AFP) — The Buffalo Bills, whose four straight failed Super Bowl bids defined football futility in the 90s, are back for more as the National Football League playoffs start here on Saturday.

The Bills host their American Conference East rivals Miami in an AFC wildcard game just three weeks after their 23-20 victory over the Dolphins in a regular-season game here.

That victory secured Buffalo's sixth AFC East title in eight years, while the Dolphins could only one keep their fingers crossed until last Sunday, when Denver's 31-28 victory over Oakland let them back into the playoffs.

Now the Dolphins, widely touted as pre-season favourites to reach the Super Bowl, will need a dominant performance from quarterback Dan Marino, and a bit of self-control from linebacker Bryan Cox.

Cox and Bills fullback Carwell Gardner were both ejected from the December 17 game at Rich Stadium after a shoving match. Cox spit at fans as he left the field, the second time he has made insulting gestures at fans in Buffalo.

Marino, who broke four NFL passing records this season, could be undone by the freezing weather normal in Buffalo this time of year.

The Bills are 8-0 in the post season at Rich Stadium, while Miami last won a road playoff game in 1972.

Buffalo has won its only two playoff meetings with Miami, a 44-34 victory at Buffalo after the 1990 season and a 29-10 victory in Miami for the 1992 AFC title.

In addition, Buffalo had the luxury of resting five key starters, including quarterback Jim Kelly, in last Sunday's 28-17 loss to Houston.

They also used that game to bring back wide receiver Andre Reed, who had missed nine games with a hamstring injury. San Diego, last season's AFC champions, host Indianapolis in the second AFC wildcard game on Sunday.

The Chargers, who appeared headed for oblivion in November, closed the season with five victories, including a 27-17 come-from-behind win over the New York Giants on Saturday.

San Diego quarterback Stan Humphries suffered a sprained neck in that game, but is expected to play. The Chargers' fate will also depend a lot on whether running back Natrone Means recovers sufficiently from a groin injury.

The Colts, who are in the playoffs for only the second time since the move to Indianapolis from Baltimore, have lost their last five playoff games since a 20-3 victory at Cleveland on December 26, 1971.

Only a dozen players on the Colts' 53-man active roster have playoff experience.

But the Colts have had an outstanding year from quarterback Jim Harbaugh, who led the NFL in passing this season after taking over the starting quarterback job from Craig Erickson in the third game.

In the National Conference wildcard games this weekend, Philadelphia host Detroit and Atlanta travel to Green Bay.

Lions meet Eagles in NFC battle

PHILADELPHIA (AFP) — The Detroit Lions ride a seven-game winning streak into their National Football League playoff game against the Eagles, another team that turned up the heat in the second half of the season.

Detroit topped off their season with a 37-10 pounding of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers last weekend.

Philadelphia finished with a loss to Chicago, but they won nine of their last 12 games after losing three of their first four.

The National Conference wildcard game on Saturday matches the Eagles' second-ranked pass defence against Detroit's number-one-ranked offense.

Lions quarterback Scott Mitchell will be playing his first postseason game after a season in which he set club records with 32 touchdowns passes for 4,338 yards.

In the Eagles he will face a defence that had an NFC-best 48 quarterback sacks.

Detroit running back Barry Sanders, fresh from his seventh consecutive 1,000-yard rushing season, will be trying to erase the memory of his last playoff game, when he was held to minus-one yard in a wildcard loss to

Green Bay last year.

Philadelphia quarterback Rodney Peete, who spent his first five seasons with Detroit, will also be making his first post-season start.

The Eagles may be without an experienced back-up for him, since Randall Cunningham has said he will skip the game if his wife, Felicity, who is expecting their first child, goes into labour early.

Green Bay will celebrate New Year's Eve by hosting a NFL playoff game for the fourth time, and the Atlanta Falcons are the team hoping to spoil the Packers' party.

The Packers have won all three of their previous New Year's Eve contests at Lambeau Field, including the NFC wildcard victory over Detroit last year.

Their other New Year's Eve victories were a 37-0 win over the New York Giants in 1961 and the 21-17 "Ice Bowl" victory over Dallas in 1967.

Packers quarterback Brett Favre has an added incentive, since the Falcons traded him away in 1992 after making him their second-round draft choice.

He came into his own this season with seven games of

300 passing yards and a total of 38 touchdowns — the third-highest single-season total in NFL history.

His most frequent target has been Robert Brooks, who had a club record 1,497 receiving yards.

Favre also benefited from an improvement in the Packers' running game as Edgar Bennett became the team's first 1,000-yard rusher since 1978.

The Falcons, who play in Atlanta's Georgia Dome, may have some trouble adjusting to Green Bay's arctic weather.

But they will be buoyed by their 28-27 upset of Super Bowl champions San Francisco in the final game of the regular season.

Quarterback Jeff George suffered a sprained neck in the first half of that game, but says he'll be ready to play in Green Bay, where the Packers have won 17 of their last 18 games.

Playoff matchups and schedule

AFC qualifiers

Kansas City (conference championship, Western Division, first-round bye, home-

field advantage throughout AFC-playoffs), Pittsburgh (Central Division, first-round bye), Buffalo (Eastern Division), Indianapolis (wild card), Miami (wild card), San Diego (wild card).

NFC qualifiers

Dallas (conference championship, Eastern Division, first-round bye, homefield advantage throughout NFC playoffs), San Francisco (Western Division, first-round bye), Green Bay (Central Division), Philadelphia (wild card), Detroit (wild card), Atlanta (wild card).

Schedule: Wild card round Saturday, December 30

Miami (9-7) at Buffalo (10-6)

Detroit (10-6) at Philadelphia (10-6)

Sunday, December 31

Atlanta (9-7) at Green Bay (11-5)

Indianapolis (9-7) at San Diego (9-7)

Divisional Playoffs Saturday, January 6

Sunday, January 7

Conference championships Sunday, January 14

Super Bowl 30 (at Phoenix) Sunday, January 28

Reds aim to cut Newcastle's lead to 1 point

LONDON (AP) — At only midway through the season, Newcastle looked a near certainty to win its first league title for 69 years. One game later the Magpies aren't such a sure bet.

Manchester United scored such a convincing 2-0 victory over Newcastle Wednesday that the bookmakers made major changes in the odds and both managers were convinced it would be a much closer race.

"Everybody has been talking about Newcastle going 13 points clear, but now it's only seven and that makes a

real difference," Reds' manager Alex Ferguson said. "I think it's wide open again now."

After its victory over Newcastle, Manchester United returns to its Old Trafford stadium Saturday to take on struggler Queens Park Rangers in the hope of further cutting the magpies lead from seven points to four.

Eric Cantona, Andy Cole, Roy Keane and Ryan Giggs had standout games for the Reds against Newcastle and another performance like that could leave the Rangers defence in tatters.

He came into his own this season with seven games of

300 passing yards and a total of 38 touchdowns — the third-highest single-season total in NFL history.

His most frequent target has been Robert Brooks, who had a club record 1,497 receiving yards.

Favre also benefited from an improvement in the Packers' running game as Edgar Bennett became the team's first 1,000-yard rusher since 1978.

The Falcons, who play in Atlanta's Georgia Dome, may have some trouble adjusting to Green Bay's arctic weather.

But they will be buoyed by their 28-27 upset of Super Bowl champions San Francisco in the final game of the regular season.

Quarterback Jeff George suffered a sprained neck in the first half of that game, but says he'll be ready to play in Green Bay, where the Packers have won 17 of their last 18 games.

Playoff matchups and schedule

AFC qualifiers

Kansas City (conference championship, Western Division, first-round bye, home-

field advantage throughout AFC-playoffs), Pittsburgh (Central Division, first-round bye), Buffalo (Eastern Division), Indianapolis (wild card), Miami (wild card), San Diego (wild card).

NFC qualifiers

Dallas (conference championship, Eastern Division, first-round bye, homefield advantage throughout NFC playoffs), San Francisco (Western Division, first-round bye), Green Bay (Central Division), Philadelphia (wild card), Detroit (wild card), Atlanta (wild card).

Schedule: Wild card round Saturday, December 30

Miami (9-7) at Buffalo (10-6)

Detroit (10-6) at Philadelphia (10-6)

Sunday, December 31

Atlanta (9-7) at Green Bay (11-5)

Indianapolis (9-7) at San Diego (9-7)

Divisional Playoffs Saturday, January 6

Sunday, January 7

Conference championships Sunday, January 14

Super Bowl 30 (at Phoenix) Sunday, January 28

Gebresilasie, Torrence top Italy poll

ROME (R) — Italy's Gazzetta Dello Sport newspaper named Ethiopian 10,000 metres world champion Haile Gebresilasie and American sprinter Gwen Torrence as its sportsman and woman of the year on Friday.

Alpine skiing overall world champion Alberto Tomba, despite recent controversies on the piste, and British-born long jumper Fiona May were the top Italian athletes in a poll of the authoritative newspaper's journalists.

And, in a locally-oriented choice, the Italian men's volleyball team was voted top team of 1995, ahead of South Africa's World Cup winning rugby union squad.

Gebresilasie polled 633 votes, ahead of American Michael Johnson on 599 and Britain's Jonathan Edwards on 592.

The Ethiopian, who this year

set 10,000 and 5,000 metre world records, told the newspaper in a telephone interview from his home in Addis Ababa that he intended to run both distances at the Atlanta Olympics next year.

Torrence polled 722 votes, ahead of German swimmer Franziska von Almsick on 713 and Cuban runner Ana Quirot, who returned from serious injury in 1995, on 525.

Tomba, embroiled in controversy this month after throwing a trophy at an Italian photographer who took and sold nude photographs of him, said it had been a special year for him but appealed for his private life to be left alone.

"It's a shame that the summer has been ruined by things that have nothing to do with sport," the skier wrote in a column.

Atlanta rushing to get ready as Olympic year arrives

ATLANTA (AP) — With its tangle of torn sidewalks, hardhats and detour signs, Atlanta looks more like a town closing for repairs than one almost ready for the summer Olympics.

The calendar is finally about to read "1996," though, and on New Year's day this scaffolded city is only 200 days from the start of the Centennial Games.

"There's a lot of anticipation, frustration, speculation," said Cesare Mammarella, owner of a restaurant just a block from three major downtown Olympic venues and the 21-acre park that is being built for the Games.

From behind the cash register of Cesare's corner cafe, Mammarella voices the mixed feelings enveloping this southern city that longs to grow into an international metropolis but fears losing all sense of control.

"I wish the Olympics were over with already," he grumbles as he looks at a road crew, surrounded by bright orange barricades blocking his entrance. He can't help but be excited, too.

"They say 400,000 people are going to walk past my door every day," Mammarella said. "It's a great opportunity."

With the clock ticking loudly, no major troubles threaten as Atlanta hits the final stretch before the Summer Games. Still, there is much work to be done, ranging from money raising to finalising a traffic plan to figuring how to deal with the potential spread of a horse disease.

Some Olympic arenas, including the main stadium, still are under construction. The city remains in the grip of a \$52 million overhaul of roads, bridges and sewers. Private

businesses are putting up new buildings and renovating old ones in time for the summer onslaught.

"You have as many days as you have left. There could be 100 days and you'd figure out how to be ready," said Billy Payne, president of the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. "We've got just about the right amount of time left."

Anita de Frantz, a U.S. member of the International Olympic Committee from Los Angeles, said only now, after more than five years of expectancy, will Atlanta begin to feel the full breadth of the Games.

"It will go by in the blink of an eye," she said of the next 6½ months.

Payne said he's thrilled, not worried, as he stares at the labyrinth and the dwindling days until the opening ceremony in July 1996.

"I guess there is the uncertainty of the unknown that will confront us," Payne said. "But with the great response of the countries of the world in accepting the invitations, the completion of our venues, the IOC really liking our plans for the opening ceremonies," we're just really excited."

Payne's troops are coming off a momentous year that saw a large portion of ACOG's \$500 million construction programme completed, a mostly successful programme of 19 pre-Olympic competitions and the launch of a ticket programme that brought in more money than expected but also drew howls of protest from customers who thought it was unfair.

Olympic planners also saw a construction worker killed

in an accident at the main stadium and discovered that some of the dormitories being built for athletes were sinking into the ground. A programme to raise money to build the Olympic park by selling commemorative bricks flopped.

The city that prides itself in American "southern hospitality" was bruised from hotels that tried to highly inflate rates for Olympic guests and landlords who dumped tenants to clear apartment space for '96 visitors.

And an accountant hired by a public oversight panel cast doubt on ACOG's ability to make its privately financed, \$1.6 billion budget. Organisers insisted their budget was "bulletproof."

ACOG must raise more than \$200 million between now and the summer to be able to pay for the Games. Some of that money will come from corporate sponsors, but most is expected from sales of tickets and souvenirs.

"Ideally, we wish it would have been wrapped up two years ago," Payne said of fund raising. "It's been a great subject matter for lots of rhetoric."

"I can't swear to you how many T-shirts we will sell, but it will be fantastic and record-breaking. And we have budgeted conservatively."

About three-fourths of the sessions to Olympic events are sold out.

Construction of the remaining arenas is on schedule, and most should be finished by spring. The 83,500-seat Olympic stadium is scheduled to get a pre-Olympic workout in May, when the international athletics challenge is held there.

TODAY AT

CINEMA TEL: 634144
PHILADELPHIA
Pierce Brosnan
as
James Bond 007
in
GOLDENEYE
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:05, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

CINEMA TEL: 699238
PLAZA
**Dangerous
Minds**
Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
*** The Santa Clause**
Shows: 12:30, 5:00

CINEMA TEL: 677420
CONCORD
CONCORD "1"
Val Kilmer & Nikol Kidman...in
Batman Forever
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
Jack Nicholson...in **WOLF**
Shows: 8:00, 10:30 p.m.
Silvester Stallone...in
ASSASSIN
Shows: 3:30, 8:30 p.m.

**AMMOUN THEATRE &
CINEMA/TEL: 618274 - 618275**
After the renovation ...
Presents to its dear
clients the strongest Arab
& Foreign films as of
1 Jan. 96

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre
TEL: 625155
Shows begin on Dec. 19, 1995 and
continue on Tuesdays, Wednesdays
and Thursdays (three days a week)
only. The programme continues
until the start of the holy month of
Ramadan. The Show is entitled:
"Ahlan Tatbie"
Welcome Normalisation
For reservation call 625155

L'Equipe names Edwards sportsman of 1995

PARIS (R) — British triple jump world champion Jonathan Edwards was voted "champion of the champions 1995" by the influential French sports daily L'Equipe on Friday.

Edwards, who became the first man to break the 18 metres barrier at the World Championships in Gothenburg last summer, received 183 points from the newspaper's journalists.

Another athlete, American Michael Johnson, winner of the 200 metres and 400 metres in Gothenburg, was second on 181 points, ahead of Spaniard Miguel Indurain, who won a record fifth consecutive cycling Tour de France last July.

Edwards takes over from Brazil's soccer superstar Romario, L'Equipe's champion of the champions in 1994. Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie, was fourth in the L'Equipe ballot.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

China to hire foreign coaches

BEIJING (AFP) — China plans to hire foreign boxing coaches and sparring partners to raise domestic standards in a sport that was only legalised here in 1986 after a 27-year ban, a report said Friday. The boxing centre under National Sports Commission is aiming to hire coaches from Cuba, Russia and European countries, along with sparring partners from Cuba, the China Daily said. "Up to now, the proposal is still under discussion and we are trying to work it out before the end of the year," the newspaper quoted an official from the centre as saying. The move will focus on improving standards within the national team, the official said, adding that some local teams were already reaping the benefits of hiring coaches from Russia and Mongolia. Plans are also in the pipeline for sending national team members abroad for training, he said. China banned boxing in 1959 for being both bourgeois and dangerous, following the death of a boxer in a national competition. The ban was lifted in 1986, but the standard of Chinese boxing — run on a strictly amateur code — is way behind other Asian countries such as South Korea. The country still only boasts around 1,000 amateur boxers, although the sport has been getting more attention in recent years with China hosting a series of quality international tournaments.

Laitinen wins large hill event

OBERHOF, Germany (AP) — Mika Laitinen of Finland won a large hill World Cup ski jumping event Friday, landing the first and third longest jumps of the day to easily beat countryman Ari-Pekka Nikkila. Laitinen had a jump of 121 metres on his first try and then added a 126.5-metre leap, five metres more than anybody else on the day. His 241.5 points was easily ahead of Nikkila, who had jumps of 115 and 121.5 for 229.4 points. Three-time Olympic champion Jens Weissflog of Germany, who on Thursday announced he was retiring after the season, was third with 224.9 points on jumps of 116.5 and 120 metres. The next World Cup jumping events are scheduled for Oberstdorf, Germany on Dec. 30; Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany on New Year's Day, Innsbruck, Austria Jan. 4; and Bischofshofen, Austria on Jan. 6. They are known as the four hills events.

2-time Olympic champ announces comeback

BORMIO, Italy (AP) — Deborah Compagnoni, the two-time Olympic champion sidelined by a knee injury since March, announced Thursday she will make her World Cup season debut at Maribor, Slovenia, next week. She will start in two giant slalom races and a slalom scheduled in the Slovenian resort Jan. 5-7. "I'm returning to action. The worst seems to be over. I hope I can prove competitive in the initial races," she said. The 25-year-old Italian last skied at the World Cup finals and did not begin the current season with the rest of her peers because of severe knee pain. She underwent arthroscopic surgery in September to remove cartilage — the third operation on her right knee. "I mostly trained slalom and giant slalom but I still hope to compete in Super-G later in the season," said Compagnoni, who won the Olympic super-G title in 1992 and the giant slalom title two years later.

Raines jons Yankees

NEW YORK (AP) — Tim Lincecum, a 36-year-old outfielder for the Chicago White Sox who was once one of U.S. Major League Baseball's premier base-stealing threats, joined the New York Yankees on Thursday. The White Sox and Yankees completed the trade late Wednesday night, a Yankees spokesman said, with the White Sox to receive future considerations. Raines, who is signed for next season at \$3.7 million, agreed to a one-year contract extension through 1997 with a club option for 1998. Raines hit .285 with 12 homers, 67 RBIs and 13 steals in 15 attempts last season. He has 777 steals in his career, fourth on the career list.

Wiberg wins 2nd successive slalom

SEMMERING, Austria (Agencies) — Sweden's Pernilla Wiberg picked up where she left off before Christmas by winning her second consecutive World Cup slalom on Friday.

The 25-year-old Swede, after a frustrating start to her season, showed that she has definitely found her form by powering her way down the Hirschenkogel Course in a two-run combined time of one minute, 40.28 seconds.

It was Wiberg's 13th career victory and her second in a row. She won the last race before the Christmas break in Veysonnaz, Switzerland.

Switzerland's Karin Roten used the fastest time of the second run to vault from fifth to second, registering her first World Cup podium finish with a two-run clocking of 1:41.20.

Austria's Elfi Eder, winner of the first two slaloms of the season, took third in 1:41.78, much to the delight of the

large partisan crowd lining the sun-drenched course.

Kjus widens lead

In Bormio, Italy, Lasse Kjus of Norway won his first ever World Cup downhill Friday to widen his lead in the men's overall standings.

Kjus crossed the line in 1min 55.35sec ahead of Andreas Schifferer of Austria, finishing in 1:55.66, and Ed Podivinsky of Canada, third in 1:55.86.

The 24-year-old Norwegian won in treacherous conditions, which rendered several turns almost impossible to negotiate.

One such turn ended the challenge of Austria's Patrick Ortlieb. The 1992 Olympic champion, looking to repeat his success a fortnight ago in Val Gardena, crashed out after losing a ski in the bottom half of a pebbly course more suited to Super-G.

Sayonara wins Sydney-Hobart, 10 hours off record

SYDNEY (R) — Sayonara, the world's newest, hi-tech ocean racing maxi, took line honours in the 51st Sydney-to-Hobart on Friday, but the U.S. yacht finished 10 hours outside the 20-year race record.

Australian maxi Brindabella finish second, two hours later.

Larry Ellison, founder of U.S. computer firm Oracle, steered his \$2.0 million Sayonara over the line, making it the first U.S. yacht to take line honours in the race in 17 years.

But it was a frustrating 630 mile race for Sayonara, which took three days, 53 minutes and 35 seconds to complete the journey down the eastern Australian coast in fickle winds.

"A few hours this morning you could have swum faster," said news corp chairman and crew member Rupert Murdoch, who helped steer the boat, worked the winches, and made soup for the crew.

U.S. maxi ketch Kialoa set a record of two days 14 hours 36 minutes and 56 seconds in 1975, running from Sydney to Hobart with strong north-eastern tail winds.

"I think if we got the right conditions we could wipe half a day off the record," Ellison told reporters in Hobart.

"We thought we had a great shot at the record, but the wind gods said no. It was an unbelievable experience,

and I would certainly do it again," said Ellison.

Ironically Kialoa only managed to average 10 knots in her record breaking run, while Sayonara can easily clock over 10 knots heading into the wind, with 16 knots under spinnaker.

Sayonara, with its space-age carbon fibre hull and computer moulded bullet proof kevlar sails, and with a crew stacked with America's Cup and Whitbread around-the-world sailors, was not favourite to take both line honours and the race record.

But after a fast start on Tuesday which put Sayonara four hours inside the race record, the new ILC70 maxi encountered fluctuating winds, which left it drifting as it struggled to enter the Derwent river and the final run home.

Skipper Geoff Stagg, a veteran of 13 Hobarts, said the race was a typical Sydney-to-Hobart, and said the yacht had a difficult time crossing Bass Strait.

"We had a very hard night across Bass Strait with 40 to 45 knots of wind gusting," Stagg said.

"We had a very, very hard night of broad reaching... crashing off very, very big seas — a very demanding night. There was still a real chance at the record."

After whipping down Tasmania's east coast, Sayonara looked to still have a chance



Media tycoon Rupert Murdoch (centre) aboard the U.S. maxi yacht Sayonara as it sails into Hobart December 29. Sayonara,

the world's newest, hi-tech ocean racing maxi, took line honours in the 51st Sydney-to-Hobart (Reuters photo)

of setting a new record, but by early Friday morning the wind had dropped and Sayonara's pace slowed dramatically. "We had a very, very, frustrating 12 hours, working very hard, picking on every wind shift," said Stagg. As Sayonara rounded Tasmania Island at the mouth of the derwent, it had a 20-mile advantage over Brindabella,

but the Australian maxi managed the fickle breeze better, cutting the lead in half, with Sayonara struggling against an outgoing tide.

But as a southeasterly kicked in across the derwent, Sayonara jibbed its way up the river at about eight knots and pulled away from Brindabella.

Brindabella, which was

narrowly beaten by seven minutes for line honours in 1994 by Australian maxi ketch Tasmania, also experienced a frustrating journey.

Brindabella, in second place out of Sydney Harbour, kept up with her newer rival Sayonara during the first two days, but a broken mainsail Halyard saw her slip back to third at one stage.

The Sydney-to-Hobart is nicknamed "hell on high water" having claimed two lives and wrecked scores of yachts. In 1993 mountainous seas forced more than half the fleet to retire. But this year only five boats have retired damaged from the original 98-boat fleet, one after being holed by a whale.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
4 TAMARA HERSCH
©1995 Tamara Hersch Games, Inc.

MINE THE RIGHT VEIN

Both vulnerable. South deals.
NORTH
♠ J 10 5 2
♥ J 8 6 3
♦ 9 3 2
♣ 10 6

WEST
♠ 9 4
♥ 7 5 2
♦ A 10 8 4
♣ Q J 9 7

EAST
♠ 8 7 6 3
♥ 10 9 4
♦ Q J 7
♣ 8 4 2

SOUTH
♠ A K Q
♥ A K Q
♦ K 8 5
♣ A K 6 3

The bidding:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1NT Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Queen of ♠.

There are hands where pursuit of a single line is all that is needed to land your contract. More often than not, however, you have to combine two or more strategies if you are to succeed.

South was rather heavy for a three-trump opening bid — 27 is usually the upper limit. However, South considered the 4-3-3-3 shape and potential blockage in the majors something of a maneuver to have East gain the lead for the fatal diamond shift.

worth a full trick, and adopted a more conservative course.

West led the queen of clubs, and declarer's first good decision was to employ a holdup play and allow West to win the trick. The continuation of the jack of clubs was taken in hand and the three winners in each major suit were cashed.

One possible line now was to cash the remaining club honor and then exit with a diamond. That would work if whoever won the diamond also held the ace. But the defenders could maneuver to have East win the trick and then declarer would have been in jeopardy when East returned the suit. As the cards lie, defeat would have been inevitable.

Declarer did better by taking his second club winner and then exiting with a club. When West turned up with the outstanding club, the contract became a laydown. A major-suit return would present dummy with two tricks, and a diamond would establish the king as the fulfilling trick.

Note that declarer's refusal to win the first trick falls only if West started with specifically Q J 9 of clubs. On any other lie of the suit the defenders can maneuver to have East gain the lead for the fatal diamond shift.

Molby in Norwich loan move

LONDON (AFP) — Liverpool midfielder Jan Molby has joined first division Norwich on a month's loan.

The former Danish international goes straight into the side for Saturday's clash with Reading, which looks certain to survive the big freeze thanks to Carrow Road's underfloor heating.

New Norwich boss Gary Megson snapped Molby up when he became available Thursday, and hopes to make the move permanent.

Molby said: "Norwich are very much geared towards the Premiership and I was surprised as anyone when they got relegated last season. Hopefully I can help them get back at the first attempt."

Fully Furnished Villa For Rent

Consists of 5 bedrooms, one master, dining room, 3 bathrooms, large reception, large salon area, quality appliances, large equipped kitchen, spacious garden, garage for 2 cars, B.B.Q area, private phone line. Surrounded on 3 sides by orchards.

Location: West Jubeiha.

Contact: Elias Mufaro. Telefax: 693534 - Amman.

FURNISHED APARTMENT FOR RENT

One bedroom, sitting room, dining room (one hall), one bathroom, kitchen with balcony, central heating and central antenna. Telephone line available.

Location: Jabal Al Weibdeh.

For more information please call 625248.

VILLA FOR RENT

Consisting of three floors, located in Al Hussein Medical Centre road, Jandawil beside Hamdan Supermarket.

Please call Tel. 630388, after 4 p.m. call Tel. 891162 Amman.

Monday, January 1st, 1996

BRUNCH DIFFERENTLY on NEW YEAR'S DAY!

BRUNCH IT UP... KAN ZAMAN'S way...
From 10:00 am - 5:00pm JD 6.000 (+)

Call us at 736-449



Kan Zaman is a product of Jordan Tourism Investments Co.

CD's FOR SALE

100'S OF CD'S FOR SALE.
PRICES JD 8.500 ONLY.
CLASSICAL, ROCK, POP, JAZZ AND
BLUES ... ETC.
FROM INTERMEDIATE TELL 676558

**FORTE
GRAND**
AMMAN

NEW YEAR'S EVE IN GRAND STYLE

Welcome the New Year at Andalusia Restaurant

in grand style with dazzling entertainment by

The Irish International European Band.

Superb cuisine and the very best service as you dance your way through the traditional midnight celebrations and beyond.

Price JD48 inclusive with a glass of champagne



Or welcome the New Year at China Town in
extravagant Oriental style entertained by the
duo Eyad & Samer.

Our Chinese chefs have created an extravagant menu
to take you through the traditional celebrations.

Price JD32 inclusive with a glass of champagne



For reservations please call 696511 ext.6543

U.S. builds giant bridge to solve NATO's Bosnia jigsaw

SARAJEVO (R) — America's biggest military bridge in 50 years moved across the Sava River Friday, a symbolic last key piece of NATO's logistics jigsaw in Bosnia.

US troops raced to finish the weather-hit Pontoon Bridge and open a vital overland route into Bosnia by Saturday, day 11 of NATO's biggest military campaign.

Storms that left troops floundering in the mud of a Balkan winter quagmire earlier in the week had made the project look almost like a bridge too far.

But on Friday U.S. army engineers were ordered to work flat out to complete the floating structure, the biggest portable bridge Americans have assembled operationally since World War II.

Tank-led columns of troops will flow over the bridge, swiftly building up America's pledged 20,000 contingent, the biggest component of a 60,000-strong NATO-led world army enforcing a Bosnian peace.

The commander of the NATO operation, Admiral Leighton Smith, flew into the rebel Serb stronghold of Banja Luka for talks on carrying out the provisions of the Dayton, Ohio peace pact which ended nearly four years of Bosnian conflict.

"I am absolutely convinced that the people of this coun-

try want peace," Adm. Smith told reporters on his first visit to the biggest town in Serb-held Bosnia.

"We are extraordinarily encouraged about what we see," Adm. Smith said, a day after NATO confirmed a 100 per cent compliance by warring Serb and Muslim forces in pulling back from designated frontline strongpoints in the capital Sarajevo.

He has reserved judgment on a contentious appeal by the Bosnian Serb leadership for a delay in carrying out provisions of the pact which will transfer parts of Sarajevo from Serb to Muslim-led government control.

His flight into Banja Luka from Sarajevo was delayed by fog as bitter weather still played havoc with NATO's buildup.

Under pressure from General William Nash, the commander of America's contingent, U.S. troops toiled to finish by Saturday the Sava bridge, plugging a crucial gap in a military corridor from Germany to Bosnia.

The bridge is going to go in tomorrow," said a determined Nash, as engineers waded through mud and water to complete an unprecedented operational project since they spanned the Rhine in the World War II campaign against Hitler's Nazi

Germany.

Work has been held up for days and was thrown into disarray on Thursday when the swollen Sava burst its banks over an adjacent U.S. camp which had to be evacuated.

"Pat, we've gotta make it happen now," Gen. Nash told Rear Commander General Pat O'Neal at Zupanka, site of the bridge.

A French air force cargo plane landed at the southern city of Mostar, the first aircraft to do so since 1992, carrying supplies for French troops stricken by the Balkan winter.

French foreign legionnaires were forced to evacuate their tented camp outside the town on Wednesday when a swollen river cascaded through their temporary base.

More than 50 advance troops of the U.S. 2nd Brigade drove from Belgrade over the Drina River border and reached Tuzla without a hitch, on Thursday, opening a new overland route for NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR).

Their arrival started a fresh chapter in Serbian-U.S. cooperation on the Bosnian conflict that was unthinkable until Belgrade, ostracised by the West for backing warring separatist Serbs, signed November's Dayton accords.

U.S. Major Vic Wariznski said the convoy had a Serbian police escort to Zvornik in Serb-held Bosnian territory. A U.S. army escort collected the convoy there and guided it across ceasefire lines to Bosnian government-controlled Tuzla.

Under the terms of accord parts of Sarajevo will be transferred to Muslim government control in January but Serb separatist leaders are appealing for an extended deadline.

Serbs are already fleeing the capital, some taking their dead with them, and say they will set fire to their homes rather than have them occupied by Bosnian Muslims.

The Pentagon said that U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry would visit American troops in Tuzla and Sarajevo next week.

White House officials said U.S. President Bill Clinton was considering a visit some time after Mr. Perry.

Mr. Clinton announced a suspension of broad economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, the two constituent parts of rump Yugoslavia, on Thursday.

In Washington, U.S. officials announced a phased lifting of an arms embargo against Bosnia's former warring factions that will allow them to acquire weapons for self defence.



A U.S. Army Chinook helicopter flies over a key river bridge into Bosnia after major part of a bridge on the Sava River Friday as weather-related problems (Reuters photo) American troops began final construction of a

COLUMN

Major warns Charles against remarriage

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major warned Prince Charles the British public would not tolerate a marriage to his long-time love Camilla Parker Bowles if he divorces Princess Diana, the Daily Mirror reported. It quoted senior members of the ruling Conservative Party as saying Mr. Major told the heir-to-the-throne that Britons would not accept Parker Bowles as his consort. "Mr. Major is believed by top Tory sources to have made that clear to Charles and the queen," the newspaper said. "It would be very unpopular if there was a divorce and remarriage," it quoted a member of the party's influential 1922 committee as saying.

Orange County treasurer used astrologer paper

SANTA ANA, California (R) — The former treasurer of a California county that declared bankruptcy relied on a mail-order astrologer and a psychic to predict interest rates, the Los Angeles Times reported. Eileen Walsh, the former finance director for Orange County, told a grand jury that in December 1994 — days before bankruptcy was declared — former Assistant Treasurer Matthew Raabe told county officials in a secret meeting that treasurer Bob Citron had relied on the astrologer and a psychic. "Matt said, 'Bob had a mail-order astrologist that gave him interest rate predictions and a psychic he consulted,'" Mr. Walsh told the grand jury.

Athlete dies after collision with another teen

SAN ANTONIO (R) — A 14-year-old athlete died shortly after a collision with another teen during a high school basketball game but the cause of death is still unknown, a medical examiner said. Cesar Ybarra, a freshman at Southside High School in San Antonio, collapsed on the court of a neighbouring high school during a basketball game evening minutes after colliding with another player.

Woman to be charged for Christmas hoax

SALT LAKE CITY (R) — A woman will be charged with tricking people into giving her cash and gifts by passing herself off as a 13-year-old boy abandoned by his parents at Christmas. Birdie Jo Hoaks, 25, will be charged with theft of services and lying to a judge, a Salt Lake County sheriff's official said. Hoaks, now held in the Salt Lake County jail, has a criminal record in several states. She surfaced on Dec. 20 after calling Utah social services and identifying herself as a 13-year-old boy, allegedly abandoned by his parents at a bus stop.

Italy mafia bosses moved prison after shootout

PALERMO (R) — Mafia godfather Salvatore "Totò" Riina and 14 other crime bosses were moved out of their high security jail in Sicily after one of their prison wardens was murdered, a legal source said. The men were transferred to prisons in northern Italy following the shooting last Saturday of Giuseppe Montalto, a warden in the Ninth Section of Palermo's Ucciardone jail where some of Italy's most dangerous criminals are held.

Arafat to disregard U.S. court summon — official

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat will not comply with a U.S. court order summoning him to testify in a civil suit over the 1985 hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship, officials indicated Friday.

"We don't give any importance to this court case," an official, who asked not to be named, said from Mr. Arafat's Palestinian authority headquarters in Gaza.

In a ruling issued Wednesday, the New York court gave Mr. Arafat, who also heads the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), until Jan. 12 to testify and said PLO property could be

seized if he fails to show up in court.

The suit for undisclosed damages was filed against the PLO by the New Jersey travel agency which sold cruise tickets to Leon Klinghoffer, a Jewish-American paraplegic who was murdered and dumped overboard by the Palestinian hijackers of the Achille Lauro.

The Italian liner was hijacked during a Mediterranean cruise.

In documents submitted to the court, Mr. Arafat and the PLO have denied any involvement in the incident, saying the hijackers "belonged to a Palestinian group

that was hostile to President Arafat and the PLO."

Abu Abbas, leader of the Palestine Liberation Front and an Arafat opponent, had been convicted in absentia of the Klinghoffer murder by an Italian court.

Crown Travel Attorney Craig Harwood said the PLO had written to the court objecting to "the constant demands on President Arafat's time in the ongoing peace process and the political consequences of giving a deposition for an American travel agency seeking damages for alleged and doubtful minor commercial losses."

Palestinian journalists appeal for release of Al Quds editor

JERUSALEM (R) — Palestinian journalists on Friday appealed to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman Yasser Arafat to free a newspaper editor detained for failing to publish an item about him on the front page of Al Quds newspaper.

The editor, Maher Al Alami, has been held without charges at a PLO jail in self-ruled Jericho since Monday. Colleagues said he was detained after he ignored a request from Mr. Arafat's office to print on the front page a story about Mr. Arafat being granted custody of Jerusalem's Christian holy places.

"I have sent a message to brother Abu Ammar (Ara-

fat) appealing for the release of journalist Maher Al Alami," said Naim Toubassi, head of the Arab Journalists Association.

Palestinian journalists, in a statement issued on Thursday, also asked the Palestinian authority to free Mr. Alami, a veteran editor at Al Quds for some 20 years.

"The community of the Palestinian journalists expressed its concern following this arrest which it fears is aimed at punishing a fellow journalist carrying out his duties," said the statement.

Journalists at Al Quds newspaper have said that PLO security officials summoned Mr. Alami to Jericho Monday and he had not returned to Jerusalem since.

His family said they saw him in Jericho on Wednesday.

"Officials from Arafat's office called Alami on Sunday night and asked him to print a report on a meeting between Arafat and the Greek Orthodox patriarch on the first page," the journalist said. "But by mistake and because the first page was loaded with Arafat news, the report was published inside."

PLO officials said Patriarch Diodoros I received Mr. Arafat and gave him symbolic custody over Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

"Apparently this was important for Arafat, and he wanted the report on the paper's first page," said the journalist.

Proposed body to fight anti-Muslim discrimination faces uphill task

AMMAN (J.T.) — A group of Jordanian parliamentarians and scholars are proposing the establishment of a body to counter discrimination against Muslims worldwide is facing a mammoth task, the group members were told Thursday by a visiting delegation representing the London-based Inter-Parliamentary Council Against Anti-Semitism.

At a meeting held at the premises of the Arab Thought Forum (ATF) in Amman, Greville Janner, a member in the council and Labour Member of Parliament, told his Jordanian interlocutors that such a body requires huge funding, which should come solely from Arab and Muslim countries.

Mr. Janner noted that it was imperative for such an organisation, whose establishment "will be very hard and demanding," to include non-Muslim members within its ranks.

He pointed out that the activities of his council for example were financed by individuals, mostly non-Jewish, "and this is how the council derives its strength," said Mr. Janner.

On the other hand, Mahmoud Sharif, a former minister of information, called on Europeans to be involved in such an endeavour. Europeans should involve themselves in fighting discrimination against Muslims because most European countries have sizeable Muslim communities, he stressed. "Muslims are living in hostile communities in Europe," said Mr. Sharif, adding that Islamophobia is more of a European problem.

A study carried out in Britain and produced at the meeting said 70,000 cases of racial and ethnic attacks take place annually, with the majority of the victims being Muslims.

Mr. Janner outlined the achievements of the council

and briefed the meeting on its successful approach in combating anti-Semitic behaviour, whether expressed in writing or verbally all over the world.

"For instance, (Croatian) President Franjo Tudjman had to rebuild a Jewish community centre which was destroyed by a bomb attack in Zagreb in 1991 at the urging of the council," he said.

Jordanian delegates said that while they were expecting more information and help from the visiting delegation in establishing their proposed body, the messages they got were more interested in inviting the Jordanians to become members in their council.

"We (the council) can only lay the table and invite you to choose what you wish," said Mr. Janner, who stressed that the council will meet with Omani, Saudi and Qatari public figures to invite them to join the council.

Iraq curbs international phone calls

AMMAN (AP) — Iraqi authorities have sharply reduced the availability of international telephone lines, apparently to hinder contacts with opposition groups in exile, travellers from Iraq reported Friday.

"All international calls are now routed through the operator," one traveller said on condition of anonymity. "It's been impossible to get through on the international circuits for three weeks."

Repeated attempts by the Associated Press to get through to Baghdad Friday were futile, even though it is the Muslim holiday when telephone connections are

usually easy to make.

Iraqi embassy officials said the telecommunications department in Baghdad was carrying out repair work on the telephone system, which was damaged in the 1991 Gulf war.

But it was widely believed that the government is deliberately restricting telephone contacts between people inside Iraq and foreign-based opposition groups seeking to topple the regime.

Sources close to Lieutenant General Hussein Kamel Al Majid, President Saddam Hussein's son-in-law who defected to Jordan in August,

say he has been in regular touch with people inside Iraq from Amman.

The move by Baghdad follows new restrictions on exit permits from Iraq, apparently to prevent people fleeing the country because of the worsening hardship caused by U.N. trade sanctions imposed in 1990 after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Travellers from Iraq told the AP last week that Baghdad has frozen exit permits, mandatory for anyone leaving the country, until new passes are issued.

The travellers said the Iraqi government was planning to double the 200,000-dinar

fee for exit permits next month.

They said that authorities in Baghdad have also reduced the validity of the permits from one year to one month.

The new 400,000-dinar fee is equivalent to \$1.3 million at the official exchange rate of 3.2 dollars to the dinar, or \$142 at the black market rate of 2,800 dinars to the dollar.

Whatever the fee costs in hard cash, few Iraqis can afford 400,000 dinars in a country where the average monthly salary is 5,000 dinars, barely enough to feed a family.

Sudan to hold Ramadan general elections

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan will hold its first general elections since 1989 during the Holy Month of Ramadan, in late January and early February, Justice Minister Abdul Azziz Shiddo said in a newspaper interview published on Friday.

"General elections will be held during the Ramadan fast," which starts around Jan. 20 and last for a month, Mr. Shiddo said, quoted by the daily Akhbar Al Yom.

"Sudan's new constitutional era will begin early next March," he said.

President Omar Al Bashir, who came to power in a military coup in 1989, had announced in December presidential and parliamentary elections would be held in "early 1996," but did not specify a date.

Mr. Shiddo underlined that presidential candidates who oppose the country's Islamic rule, in place since the coup, would not be barred from the race.

A "reconciliation committee" would be formed to "explain the case of any candidate who does not believe in the (Islamic) cultural orientation so the public is aware of his position," Mr. Shiddo said.

But the committee "has no right to drop any candidacy or force any candidate to withdraw," he said.

Mr. Shiddo also said Khartoum would not bar international observers of the vote to "ascertain the credibility of the election experience."

UNHCR to check Ethiopian complaint about Sudan

GENEVA (R) — The United Nations refugee agency said on Friday it was looking into Ethiopia's accusations that Sudan has beaten, tortured and killed Ethiopian refugees.

Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin's letter to Sadako Ogata, U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, has been received and is being taken "very seriously," according to her spokesman.

"We confirm that we have received the letter and take it

very seriously and are looking into it," Ron Redmond, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva, told Reuters.

"We are obviously concerned whenever we get such allegations. But right now we have no report from our office whether these things are happening," he added.

Mr. Seyoum's letter, read on state-run television on Thursday night, said: "Sudan is committing brutal and

sinister acts of beating, torturing and killing Ethiopian refugees."

The foreign minister urged Mr. Ogata to give legal protection to Ethiopian refugees in Sudan.

It cited the example of refugee Tesfaye Fasil, saying he was beaten and hanged in prison by Sudanese security men last Sunday, and said Abrahama Adem, was also tortured and his body thrown into the Rezoriz River in eastern Sudan Oct. 24.

Parliamentarians, unionists visit Shbeilat in prison

By Sa'eda Kilani

Special to the Jordan Times AMMAN — Dozens of Parliamentarians and Unionists Friday visited President of the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) Leith Shbeilat in prison in an explicit show of solidarity with the outspoken opposition figure who was detained earlier this month on four charges of violating the law.

While police ordered the gathering be dispersed in front of Juweideh prison, where Mr. Shbeilat was held, they allowed all visitors with identification cards in to see him. His wife and four daughters remained outside, insisting on their desire to have a private visit instead of communicating with their father and husband through metal fence that bars visitors from prisoners.

"We demand his immediate release," said Lower House of Parliament Deputy Hammam Sa'eed. "He is a man of principle." Mr. Sa'eed, himself an outspoken Islamist deputy, was accompanied by few other Parliamentarians but most of those who showed up at the prison were Unionists.

"I am not afraid," Mr. Shbeilat told journalists accompanying the group. "Inside or outside (of prison)

I remain free."

Mr. Shbeilat, a former deputy, was held on Dec. 9 but was denied bail, according to Hussni Khafash, a member of the lawyers committee for his defence formed shortly after his arrest.

Mr. Shbeilat was charged with distributing statements that are considered offensive to Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor, inciting sectarian and ethnic troubles, undermining the country's financial status and shaking the confidence in the Jordanian dinar. The charges, which are believed to be based on lectures Mr. Shbeilat gave in the last two months, are considered as an offence and not a crime. They carry a maximum sentence of three years in prison.

"What is a sentence of one year?" Mr. Shbeilat said. "I have no problem with that. It is the responsibility of Jordanians to make a move."

Visitors from Kerak, Irbid, Aqaba, and Zarqa arrived in groups in the early morning hours yesterday at Juweideh prison, south of Amman. Some visitors claimed they were stopped on their way by policemen and that others were taken to the police station for investigation. These claims, however, could not be substantiated.

Mr. Shbeilat was convicted and sentenced in 1992 to 20 years in jail along with former fellow Islamist Deputy Ya'qub Qarrash for charges that they belonged to an illegal Islamic group called Shabab Al Nafeer Al Islami (the vanguards of Islamic youth) which aimed at toppling the regime. Both were freed shortly after the King issued a general amnesty. Upon release from jail, Mr. Shbeilat announced he was quitting politics because of what he said was the silence of political groups over what he saw as attempts to undermine democracy. He staged a political comeback, however, when he won the JEA presidency two years later.

"As God revealed that the first case (was baseless), he will reveal the second one too," Mr. Qarrash said after he visited Mr. Shbeilat in prison. "Injustice has reached an unbearable level."

It was the first time Mr. Qarrash was seen in public after he was convicted and freed. He did not say whether he would be reengaging in politics but said that for him political action "is a continuous process."

"Our deeds are not worth mentioning when compared to Mr. Shbeilat's," Mr. Qarrash said. "I'm planning to go back to Jerusalem."